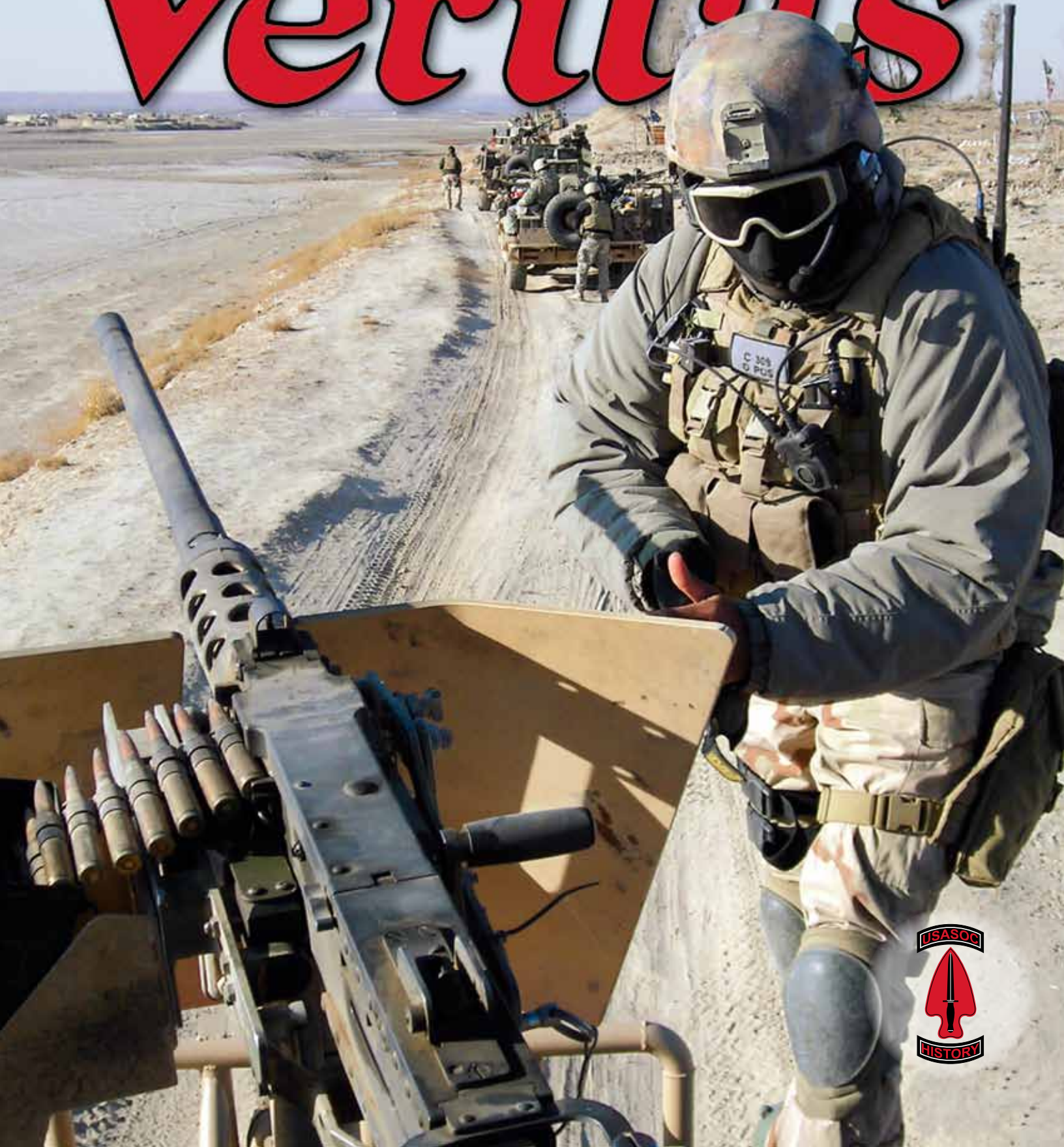


Journal of Army Special Operations History

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Veritas



Areas of Operations Covered in this *Veritas*...



Cover Photo: Men of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group moving through the Panjwayi Valley, Afghanistan during Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*, December 2006. The up-armored GMVs, known to the Taliban as "Thorn Trucks" were greatly feared by the enemy.



Veritas

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The Azimuth of the USASOC History Office

In this first issue for the year, it is an honor to congratulate OSS Italian & French OG, SF pioneer, and CIA veteran Caesar J. Civitella as the recipient of the USSOCOM Bull Simons Award for 2008.

Our azimuth remains true thanks to the support of our readers. However, the plan to provide a summary of the El Salvador war in a series of articles for *Veritas* in conjunction with the manuscript rewrite was overly ambitious. Instead, the evolution of the professional relationship between Army SOF and the ESAF (El Salvador Armed Forces) will be highlighted by early MTT (mobile training team) mission stories. The publicity surrounding the Camp Mackall history project through veterans groups and North Carolina newspapers has produced responses from former soldiers and civilians countrywide who served at the U.S. Army Airborne Center during WWII. We still need your help with historical information for the 1950-1980 period.

Keeping track of special ops reunions is difficult. Timely e-mail reminders will enable us to schedule attendance and provide notices for association newsletters and the reunion announcements. Regular participation has enabled us to build an extensive digital archive of old photos, insignia, and group memorabilia. All make our articles and books more interesting and personal.

Thanks to Herb Auerbach of Van Nuys, CA ("V" Force & OSS Det 101 veteran) we will have a collection of the *CBI Roundup*. Old association newsletters and unit yearbooks provide a treasure trove of information. Period unit newspapers, like the 3/7th SFG "BOD," are wanted to give more life to our histories. Their photos can be scanned. We are constantly "filling holes" in our Vietnam-era *Veritas* and the 5th SFG Vietnam *Green Beret* collections; photocopies will suffice until we can get originals. Before

dumping old special ops books, magazines, photos, and memorabilia into the trash, please give us a call or send an e-mail. Thanks.

We trust the sealed plastic covers on individually mailed copies of *Veritas* will reduce destruction and pilfering. "Snap Shot" is back to show the value of old photos in the history business. Constructive comments, requests for specific history topics, and submissions from the field are welcome. CHB



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“Timing Is Everything”:

*A PW Escape in WWII**

by Charles H. Briscoe

German PWs moved westward on the Autobahn while the 6th Armored Division pushed east towards Chemnitz, Czechoslovakia.

**Note: The WWII abbreviation for prisoner of war was PW. That period acronym will be used throughout this article.*

Infantry Captain Terrance A. "Terry" Vangen's position in World War II was altered dramatically on 6 April 1945. After a string of successes leading his company against the concrete bunkers of the Siegfried Line near Trier, crossing the Rhine, and driving the Germans from a number of towns south of Kassel, his luck abruptly changed. While his E Company, 385th Infantry troops ferreted out enemy soldiers from homes and searched for weapons, CPT Vangen led a jeep reconnaissance of his next objective several miles away.

The 76th Infantry Division's "race" across central Germany began on 2 April as it assumed the lead of all XX Corps infantry divisions following in the wake of the 6th Armored Division. The tankers just motioned German soldiers, who tried to surrender, rearward.² The



76th Infantry Division jeeps had a strong, four-foot V-shaped, angled bar welded to their front bumpers to foil German attempts to behead Americans with wire strung across the roads.

The largest all American command fielded in U.S. history.

On 4 April 1945 General Omar N. Bradley, 12th Army Group commander, had 4 field armies, 12 corps, and 48 divisions-more than 1,300,000 troops, under his command. It was the largest all American command fielded in U.S. history. With this immense force General Bradley was to reduce the Ruhr while cutting a wide swath across the center of Germany in the general direction of Leipzig, Czechoslovakia, and Dresden, Poland. This main Allied effort was to split Germany in two by linking with the Russians.³

hemorrhaging *Wehrmacht* was disintegrating rapidly. The deeper the Allies pushed into the Western Front, the faster the pace became. There were two almost parallel lines on the map along a latitude that straddled the *Autobahn*. Between them the 385th Infantry advanced like a lawnmower cutting a swath across an enormous lawn. "Only this lawn had towns on it, Germans, casualties and death, and hundreds of PWs, liberated slaves and Allied Prisoners of War. Jeeps and trucks careened wildly from town to town, hauling up in the center of villages where the 'Doughs' scrambled from trucks behind the tanks to clear whatever was necessary."⁴ The 76th Infantry Division, as part of Major General (MG) Walton H. Walker's XX Corps in Lieutenant General (LTG) George

S. Patton's Third Army, was pushing in a wide swath towards Chemnitz, Czechoslovakia, on the Elbe River.⁵ This massive eastward offensive was the reason CPT Terry Vangen was conducting a reconnaissance in front of his troops on 6 April 1945.

The reconnaissance party was halted by enemy tank fire four hundred meters short of Ungerstrode. CPT Terry Vangen, in the lead jeep, stood up to get a better view. When enemy machinegun fire shattered his windshield, both trailing jeeps quickly reversed to escape the ambush. Caught in the "kill zone" of the ambush, CPT Vangen, his jeep driver, and artillery sergeant [Sergeant (SGT) Montour] leaped from their jeep and scrambled for cover in a streambed adjacent to the road. As the three Americans started backtracking down the stream, a German soldier shouted, "Halt!" Vangen, covering the rear, crawled up the embankment. He shot an approaching German with his M-1 carbine. This action prompted another enemy soldier to toss a "potato masher" handgrenade down



MG Walton H. Walker, XX Corps Commander.



*3rd Infantry
Regiment DUI*



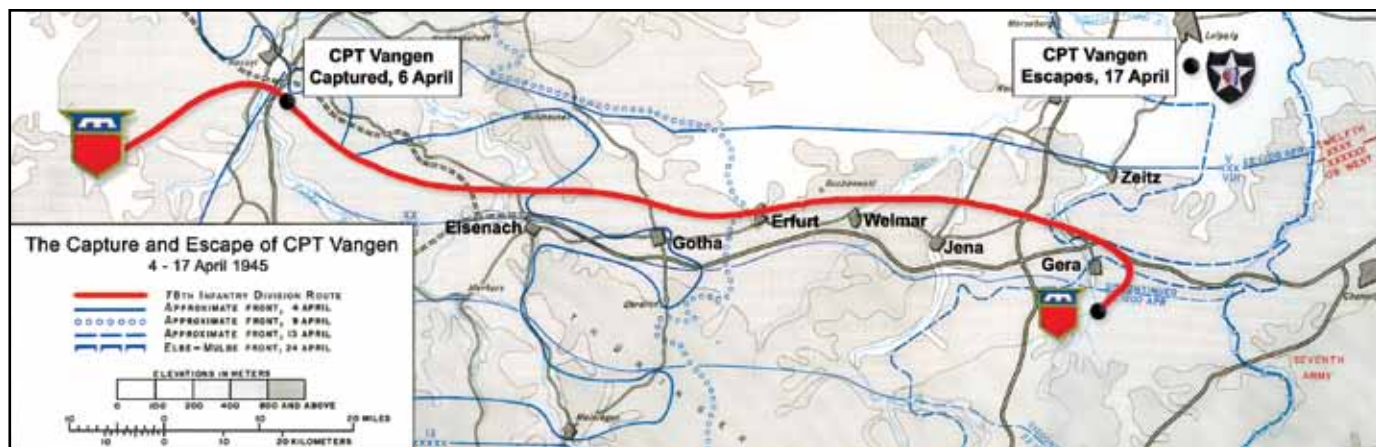
*76th ID
SSI*



*385th Infantry Regimental
Coat of Arms*



*2-385th Infantry
DUI*



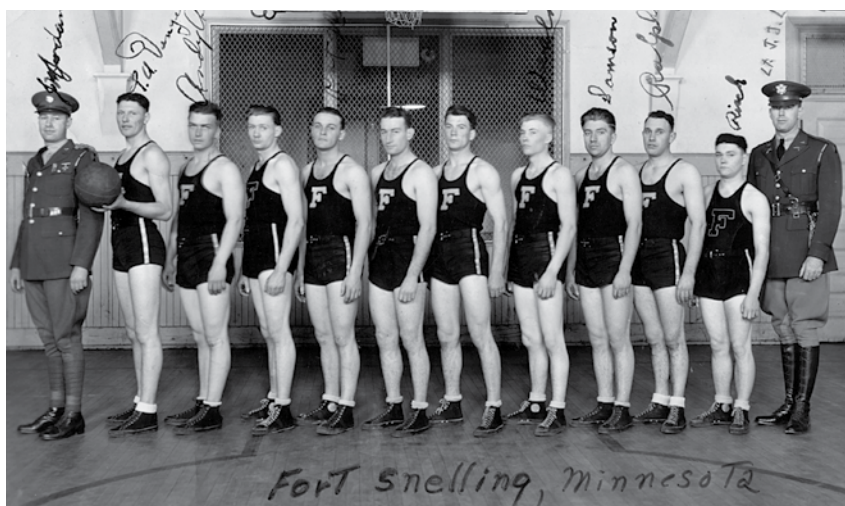
Strip map showing 385th Infantry objectives during the 76th ID drive to the Elbe River in April 1945.

into the streambed. Shrapnel from the exploding grenade wounded the driver in the leg and the concussive effect knocked SGT Montour unconscious.

When the American captain raised up again, a volley of small arms fire from behind him shattered his carbine, split his thumb apart, cut his face, and slashed an ear. As Vangen dropped the useless weapon, he looked up to see enemy soldiers all around pointing rifles at him and his driver. He quickly raised his hands before the Germans could shoot him again, realizing that further resistance was futile. Several German soldiers then jumped down into the streambed. When Vangen turned to help the unconscious SGT Montour, they prodded him away and onto the road with their rifle barrels. Now, the company commander had to deal with war as a PW.⁶

How Captain Terry Vangen dealt with his capture demonstrated that practicing SERE (Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape) elements would be based on many variables in combat. SERE training is mandatory for Special Forces, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) pilots and flight crewmen, and other selected Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF). Knowing his background and experience one can appreciate how CPT Vangen capitalized on them to escape and rejoin his unit. This account shows today's ARSOF soldiers how important mental and physical strength in war are.

Fortunately, Captain Terry Vangen was not typical of company commanders in the National Guard infantry divisions mobilized for war. He had enlisted in a reduced strength Regular Army (RA) in 1935 to become a professional soldier because jobs were very scarce in north-central Minnesota (the Mesabi iron range region) during the Depression. Vangen joined the Army to help his family.⁷ The Army clothed, housed, fed, and paid its soldiers. Though meager by today's standards, \$21 a month helped support his family in Pengilly, MN. His father was a Norwegian immigrant who worked as a seasonal lumberman and mine driller. One key aspect in



The F Company, 3rd Infantry Regiment basketball champions of 1936-37. CPL Terry Vangen is the tallest (second from left).



12th Army Group
SSI



XX Corps
SSI



6th Armored
Division SSI



3rd Army
SSI



The Fort Snelling, MN, championship baseball team of 1936-37. CPL Vangen is the tallest (3rd from left, standing).



Unit Supply, 3rd Infantry Regiment during its summer training at Camp Ripley, MN, 1936.



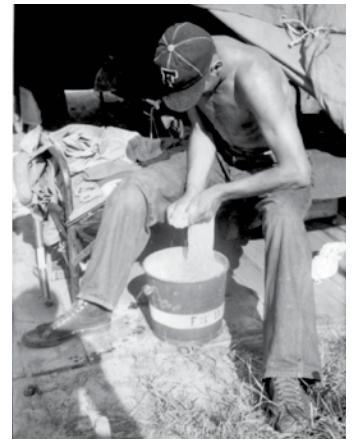
Beating the heat, 3rd Infantry Regiment rolled its tents at Camp Ripley, MN, 1936.

the poorly-funded and understrength RA infantry and artillery regiments service-wide was sports.

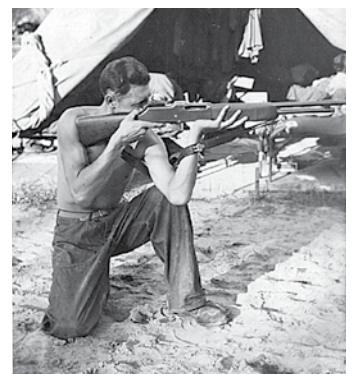
The big, (6'3"), natural athlete excelled as a baseball and basketball player for the 3rd Infantry Regiment at Fort Snelling (near St. Paul), MN, two hundred miles from home. The 3rd Infantry did annual marksmanship qualifications, road marches, and small-scale maneuvers at Camps McCoy in Wisconsin, and Ripley in



Private Terry A. Vangen in dress uniform and armed with M-1903A1 .30 cal rifle before a guard mount at Fort Snelling, MN, in 1936.



Laundry, 3rd Infantry Regiment at Camp Ripley, MN, 1936.



3rd Infantry Regiment soldier with a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) during its summer training at Camp Ripley, MN, 1936.



Barbershop, 3rd Infantry Regiment at Camp Ripley, MN, 1936.

Minnesota in the summer. Natural leadership and the ability to get things done earned promotions and more responsibility—corporal in two years, sergeant in three, and then squad leader. "These were rapid promotions at the time. I began to hustle when I found out that my two younger brothers were being paid thirty dollars a month in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)," chuckled Vangen.⁸

However, Vangen discovered that sergeant's pay was insufficient when he was sent to a high school ROTC (Reserve Officers Training



Civilian Conservation Corps Poster and Patch



Officer Candidates at Fort Benning, GA, practice anti-tank gunnery in February 1942.



OCS Candidates taking written tests in the field at Fort Benning.

Corps) assignment in Davenport, Iowa, in the fall of 1940. Detached enlisted men (DEML) received a small stipend from the school, but it did not offset free room and meals in the barracks. The sergeant, like his supervisor, a WWI veteran and first sergeant, worked part-time at a gas station to make ends meet. It was his promotion to staff sergeant shortly before Pearl Harbor that enabled Vangen to get married. Congress' declaration of war changed SSG Vangen's life plans radically as it did for millions of Americans.⁹

A Regular Army officer and WWI veteran in charge of ROTC, Major Clark, recognized the potential in



The 76th Infantry Division initially trained at Fort Meade, MD, in May 1942.

this promising professional soldier. "He wanted me to apply for Officers Candidate School (OCS). MAJ Clark said that an Army mobilizing for war needed experienced, quality NCOs to become officer leaders. It was a daunting prospect for me, a GED high school graduate, but MAJ Clark and my wife had confidence that I could make it," recalled Vangen.¹⁰

In early February 1942, SSG Vangen entered Infantry OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia. The academics proved tough for the older soldiers. Physical training, tactics, weaponry, and the field exercises were a "snap" for them. Better-educated candidates (some were college graduates) tutored in exchange for leadership help. "I had to spend a lot of time studying in the latrine after 'lights out' at night, but it paid off. Academics washed out more than fifty percent of my OCS class. Eighty of us graduated," said Vangen.¹¹

In May 1942, the new Army Reserve second lieutenant (2LT) reported in to the 76th Infantry Division (ID) at Fort Meade, Maryland. The 76th ID was a National Guard division from New England that had just been activated. The NCO cadre were Regular Army soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division. Lieutenant Vangen was to be 1st Rifle Platoon Leader of F Company, 2nd Battalion, 385th Infantry Regiment. "Our original regimental commander was Colonel (COL) Clifford J. Mathews, a West Point WWI veteran, but still tough. Murphy did every twenty-five mile road march. He was the epitome of a real soldier who led us through all training. COL Mathews stressed the importance of Ranger tactics and EIB (Expert Infantry Badge) qualification for NCOs and soldiers at

The Infantry School United States Army

This is to Certify that
Sergeant Terrance Anthony Vangen
has successfully completed the
Officer Candidates Course

given during the period
February 13, 1942 to May 15, 1942

and has been recommended for a Commission
as Second Lieutenant in the Army of the
United States

For the Commandant

H. B. Wheeler
Colonel of Infantry

WWII OCS
Graduation
Certificate



*Infantry OCS
SSI*



Winter training in the Ottawa National Forest along Lake Superior in northern Michigan, January-February 1943.

Camp A.P. Hill in Virginia. We were good enough to be division aggressors during XVI Corps winter maneuvers held in the Ottawa National Forest along Lake Superior in northern Michigan (near Watersmeet) in early 1944. Though COL Mathews was an outstanding leader, he was deemed too old for combat. It was a shame because he made us into officers," remembered Vangen.¹²

Though the 76th was hit heavily for officers and sergeants before the North African and Normandy invasions and twice more to fill divisions going overseas earlier, LT Vangen was considered too good to lose. After about a year as the F Company 1st Platoon leader, he became the Weapons Platoon leader, then served as the company Executive Officer, and was the acting Company Commander until he took command of E Company when he was promoted to captain. This happened shortly before Thanksgiving 1944 when the 385th Infantry left Camp Myles Standish in Massachusetts, bound for England. When CPT Vangen entered combat, he had been commanding units in 2nd Battalion for thirty months. This was unusual but not unheard of for OCS officers with prior enlisted time. The Army needed experienced soldiers in combat, but Reserve Officers had limited careers.¹³

The 76th ID boarded U.S. Navy LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) in regimental increments in mid-December 1944 for LeHavre, France. The 304th, 385th, and the 417th Infantry Regiments were then loaded into French railcars for movement north. Truck convoys carried them to the MLR (Main Line of Resistance) near Ortho, Luxembourg just before Christmas. The 385th, Vangen's unit, replaced a cavalry regiment screening south of the Sauer River. The 76th, like many other untested divisions, was being integrated into the line during the holiday lull to get some exposure to combat. Initially, combat patrols (six to ten soldiers) were led by company commanders. It was a period of "night patrols and nagging little skirmishes... barns burning in the night, and first casualties" because the division had been in reserve during the Battle of the Bulge.¹⁵ But, in January 1945, the 76th crossed the Sauer River to spearhead the XII Army Group push to Eternach on the Saar River. After following their sister regiment, the 417th Infantry, into Germany, the 385th led the division assault on the thickest portion of the Siegfried Line near Minden (forty pillboxes per square mile of rolling terrain with little vegetation, trenches and minefields, and devoid of roads).¹⁶

On 19 February 1945, CPT Terry Vangen, Company E, 385th Infantry, was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action. Intelligence reports indicated that the nearest two pillboxes that his company was to capture contained friendly troops. Rather than putting them at risk, Vangen with one volunteer ran forward under enemy sniper and mortar fire to investigate. "It was the rifleman against concrete and steel."¹⁷ After finding an American officer and three enlisted soldiers who had been cut off from their unit, Vangen and his assistant took turns providing covering fire that enabled the four battle-weakened and

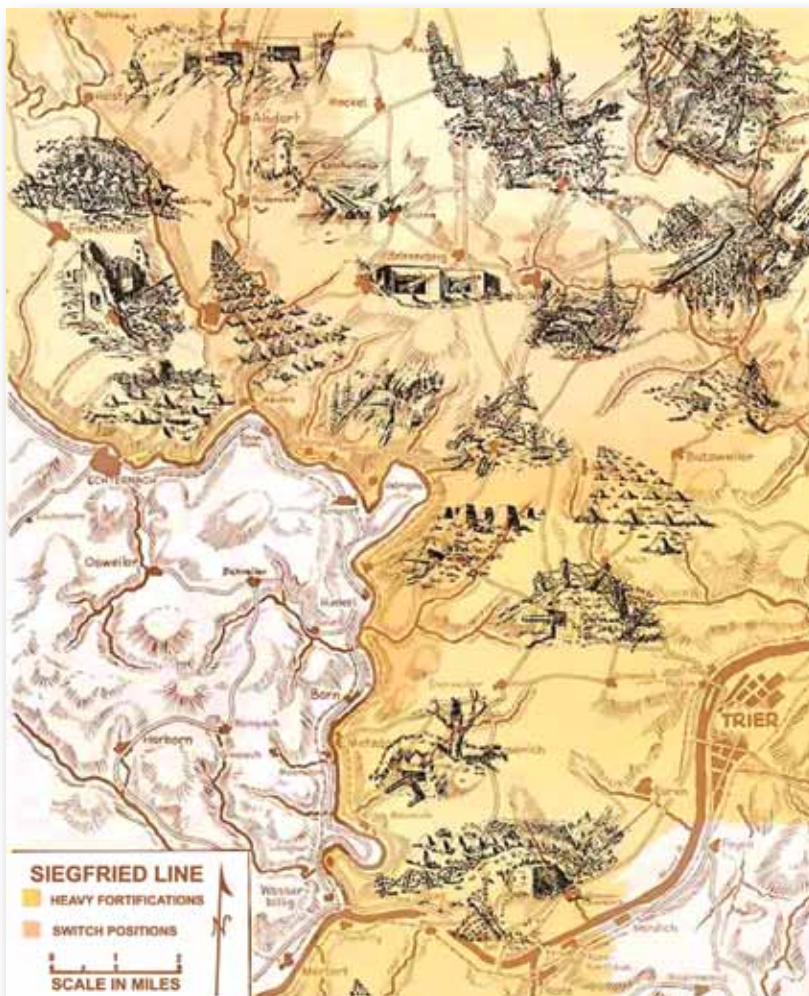


CPT Vangen (center front) with the officers of E Company, 385th Infantry.

wounded U.S. soldiers to reach friendly lines. That completed, CPT Vangen, under “extreme artillery and sniper fire,” personally led attacks on three other enemy-held pillboxes. Though wounded he continued to press the attack forward enabling his company to breach the first lines of pillboxes constituting the Siegfried Line.¹⁸ This act of heroism, however, brought Vangen some unforgettable attention from LTG George Patton, the legendary Third Army commander.

“I just happened to be in the rear when Patton was visiting 385th Infantry headquarters. I stopped loading ammo into my jeep trailer just long enough to render a snappy salute to General Patton as he passed by. He asked Colonel Onto P. Bragon, my regimental commander, who that was handling the ammo nearby. When COL Bragon proudly responded, ‘Captain Terry Vangen. He was just awarded the Silver Star,’ LTG Patton replied, ‘Get some insignia on him. He doesn’t look like a captain,’ and got into his jeep and left,” said Vangen. “After that, I kept my captain’s bars visible...until I was captured in April.”¹⁹

The introduction to this article ended with two wounded American soldiers, CPT Terry Vangen and his



The 76th ID history facsimile map of the Siegfried Line area.

jeep driver, being hustled north from Ungerstrode by the Germans on 6 April 1945. The wounded artilleryman, SGT Montour had been left behind, unconscious in the streambed. (*Note: When E Company, 385th Infantry captured Ungerstrode a few days later, Montour was found in a barn. Someone had taken him there for safety, but had not treated his wounds.)²⁰

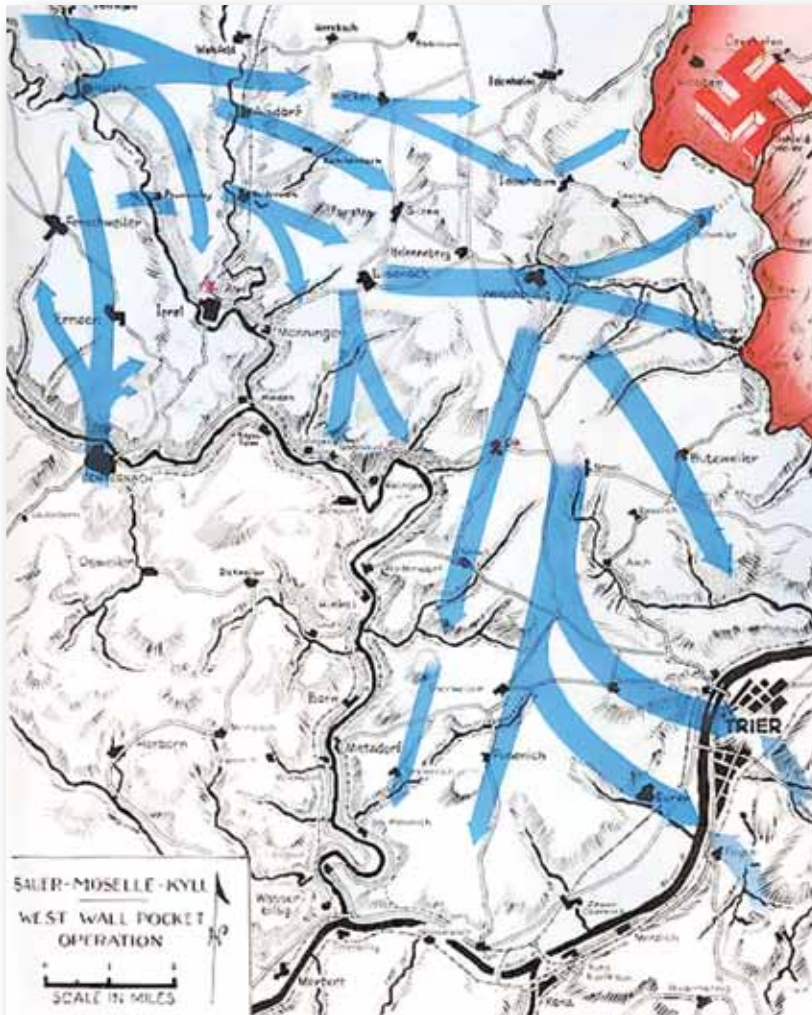
“I ditched my helmet with the painted captain’s bars



An M4 Sherman tank carries Third U.S. Army troops through the dragon’s teeth antitank barriers of the Siegfried Line.



The Siegfried Line near Minden, Germany, contained forty pillboxes per square mile, defensive trench systems, and minefields. The rolling terrain had little vegetation.



The drive to the Moselle River was the second 76th ID objective.



LTG George S. Patton, legendary commander of the Third U.S. Army, inspecting the Siegfried Line fortifications in late February 1945.



Colonel Onto P. "O.P." Bragon, commander, 385th Infantry Regiment.

while climbing up the stream bank and somehow got my rank off my shirt collar. As we closed on the town American artillery opened up and we were hurried to a defiladed side of a hill just beyond the impacting rounds. A well-camouflaged civilian car was parked nearby.

The two of us were quickly loaded inside and taken to a nearby hospital. I initially resisted a doctor wielding a hypodermic needle thinking it was a drug. When he said, 'Tetanus,' I relaxed, took the shot, and permitted him to clean, treat, and bandage my wounds. The last time I saw my driver was when I was led away for interrogation," said Vangen.²¹

Interestingly, "every German officer who could speak English interrogated me. I must have been questioned twenty times as they shuttled me from place to place. They continually asked me if we were fighting the Germans or the Nazi Party. I said that I was fighting on orders and was not in a position to discuss politics. One officer wearing jodhpurs showed me an issue of their weekly propaganda newspaper [most likely *Das Reich*] that had an article entitled, 'Jerry PWs to Be Turned Over to Russia as Slave Laborers After War.' He wanted to know whether it was true that American soldiers killed all the SS troops they captured. My basic reply was name, rank, and serial number, but they already knew my division and regiment," Vangen said.²²

Constant attacks by American forces had forced the Germans to reorganize depleted elements to man hasty defensive positions where artillery fire and advancing tanks further reduced their ranks. "For three days I was marched from one town to another and sometimes right back the way we had come. Obviously, they didn't know what end was up. One day we were retreating faster than usual and I was allowed to ride on an ammunition truck ahead of a fuel tanker. A couple of Army Air Corps P-38s strafed the convoy and set the fuel truck afire. The ammo truck on which I was riding managed to find cover and escape," related Vangen.²³

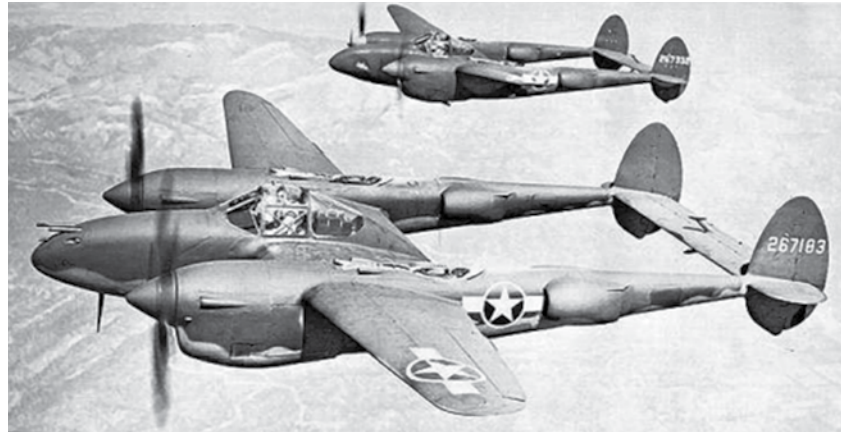
"Some nights, I was put in a building alone; other times I had company...with one to three other PWs. On the night of 8 April, I was locked up with a Dutch civilian detainee and two other American soldiers. That was the only time I had potato soup with some black bread. Normally, it was only two slices of bread a day. That night the daughter of a cook managed to "palm" me a K-ration cigarette as I waited in line to be fed. I was quite surprised when a guard asked if I wanted a light... in English! I was so grateful that after a few quick drags I passed it over to him," said Vangen.

"When we were rousted out at 3:00 A.M. the next day, I thought that we were to be shot after a decent meal and a cigarette. Thankfully, that wasn't the case. American forces were very close," related Vangen. "It was obvious that the Germans were becoming desperate. I sensed the time had come to find an opportunity to escape."²⁴



The German Wehrmacht used extensive numbers of captured Russian PPsh sub-machineguns on the Western Front.

"The four of us were put between two groups of Germans as they moved down a farm road in column. There were about thirty enemy soldiers in each group. Just as daylight was breaking artillery began falling all around us. It was a typical heavy barrage that preceded another ground attack, but I decided to take advantage of the discomforting noise and nearby explosions. I began shouting, 'Stop! Stop! We're going to be killed,' and ran around screaming and waving my arms at



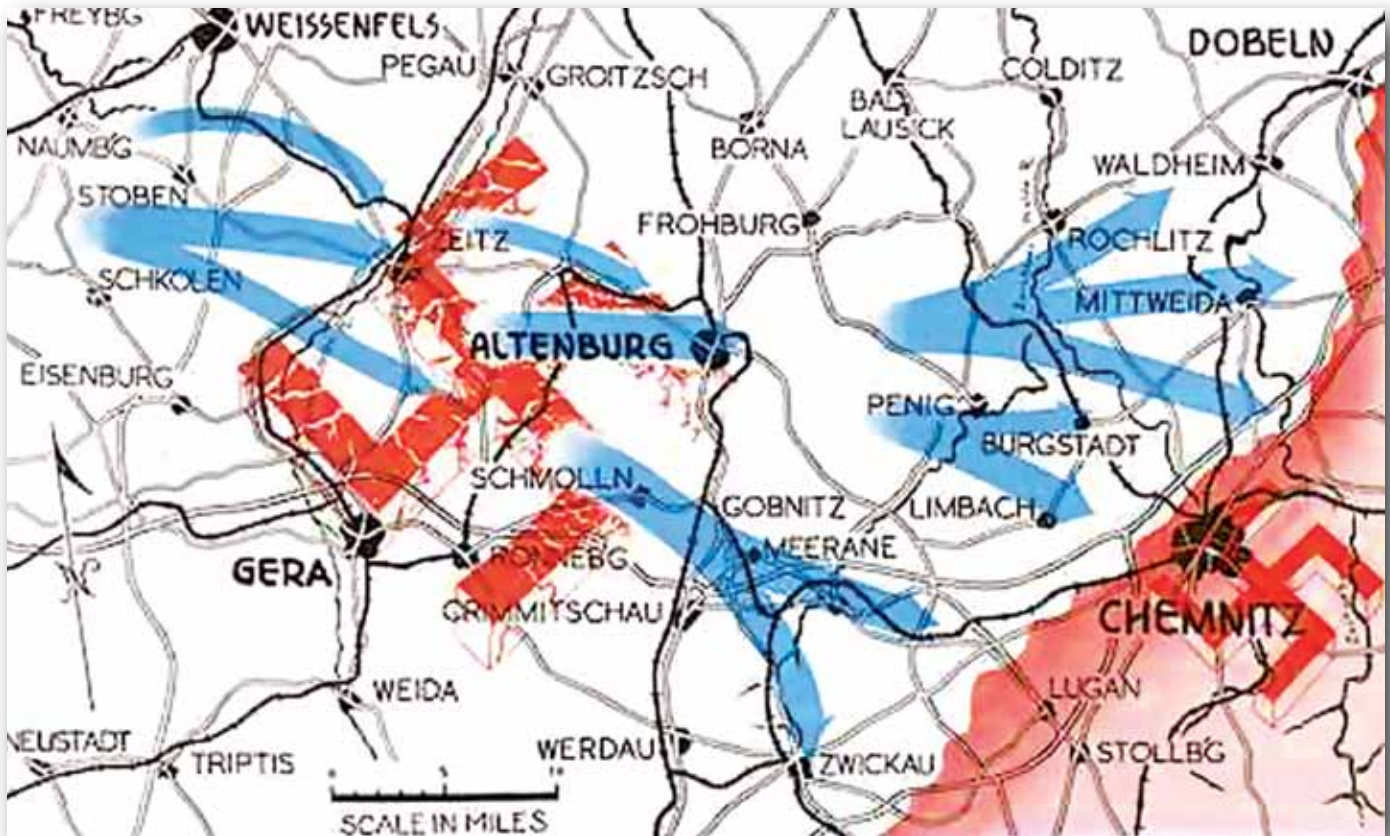
U.S. Army Air Force P-38 "Lightning" fighter aircraft.

my captors, pretending to be shell-shocked. I managed to work to the rear of the second group of German guards when the road deteriorated at a stream crossing. Everyone was slipping on the slick moss-covered rocks, losing balance, stumbling and falling, and getting wet. The Germans were in a hurry to escape the 'walking' artillery preparation knowing that the infantry would be attacking close behind," related Vangen.²⁵

"I purposefully tripped and fell down among the rocks with a loud crash. Then, I grabbed my right knee and starting moaning and 'writhing in pain.' The Germans generally ignored me in their haste, I guess figuring that I would eventually get up and hobble after them. As they moved out of sight, they sent a young soldier back. By then the main body was well out of sight. Though he

Facsimile drawing of CPT Terry Vangen "surrendering" to 2nd Infantry Division soldiers on 17 April 1945.





The final offensive of the 76th ID ended along the Zwickauer Mulde River, just short of the Elbe River, some ten miles from Chemnitz, Czechoslovakia.



The M-4 Sherman medium tank was the work-horse of American armored forces during WWII.

approached me cautiously, the young man was carrying a cylinder-fed sub-machinegun slung over his shoulder. I made a few fainthearted couple of attempts to get up, theatrically splashing the water as I fell back down. But, they were sufficiently convincing to get him to offer a hand," Vangen said.²⁶

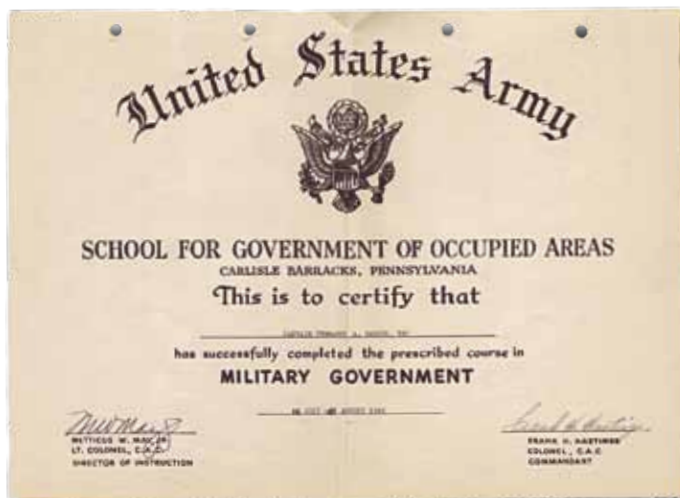
"As he bent over to reach under my arm, I sprang



CPT Terry Vangen enjoys a cigarette after returning to his unit.

up, stripping him of his weapon. He offered no resistance, except to say, 'No kaput! No kaput!' (Don't kill me!) while raising his arms high. With our roles reversed, I motioned for him to get in front of me and used the gun barrel to point towards some thick vegetation a few hundred meters away. We needed to get under cover quick. The U.S. artillery was coming closer. In that wooded area we found large stacks of firewood. I immediately got down to burrow between the stacks and to camouflage myself with branches. My young prisoner saw the wisdom of getting down among the stacked firewood but declined to cover himself up. He simply sat down, content to be 'out of the war.' Together, we spent that morning, afternoon, and night in that wood pile awaiting our fates."

"At daybreak the next day (17 April 1945), I was jerked



CPT Terry Vangen's Military Government Course certificate from Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1946.

awake by the sound of a tank nearby. My prisoner, still sitting there, had heard it also. I was pretty sure by the sound of the engine noise that it was a Sherman and stripped off my covering of branches. I crawled to the end of the woodpile to investigate. There was definitely a tank about seventy-five meters away with its engine idling, but the silhouette was obscured by the vegetation. I had to move closer to be sure, but I didn't want to be shot...especially by my own guys," said the American infantry company commander cum PW.²⁷

"I led the way as we inched slowly towards the idling tank. Fortunately, our movement was covered by the engine noise. Then, I spotted a jeep with Americans next to the tank. When we got about fifteen meters away, I began shouting loudly, 'Hey! Hey! Hey! I'm an escaped American PW and I have a German prisoner with me.' Having gotten their attention, I yelled, 'We're going to stand up with our hands raised and for heavens sakes, don't shoot us! I'm Captain Terry Vangen, E Company, 385th Infantry.' As we stood up, I'll never forget seeing 'Indianhead' patches on their uniforms. They were definitely 2nd Infantry [Division] guys."²⁸

"They took charge of my grateful German prisoner, gave me a cigarette and some coffee, and we were taken back to their regimental headquarters. The CP alerted the 385th, who took me off MIA (Missing in Action), Presumed Captured status, sent the appropriate notifications to my wife and family, and I finally rejoined



1LT John Montgomery Belk (later CEO of more than 300 department stores in the southeast, southwest, and mid-Atlantic regions of the U.S.) served with CPT Terry Vangen at Chonju Challo Puk-to Province, Korea in 1951-1952

my battalion the next day. It seemed that SGT Montour, my wounded artilleryman, had explained what occurred on 6 April 1945 and thought that I had been captured. That ended my eleven days as a PW."²⁹

The 385th had been leading the division charge behind the 6th Armored until 17 April when its turn in reserve caused it to be attached to VIII Corps. It relieved 4th Armored Division units on the eastern side of the Zwickauer Mulde River, just short of the Elbe River, ten miles from Chemnitz, Czechoslovakia. The 76th ID was waiting to linkup with the Russians when CPT Terry Vangen rejoined his regiment. The 385th Infantry was collecting displaced persons, citizens of Chemnitz, and surrendering German soldiers fleeing the Russians and relocating them to refugee camps and PW camps behind American lines.³⁰

"As to what kept me going and determined to escape if given the chance, I was married with one daughter (Sharon), a competitive athlete and an old soldier (ten years service in 1945) with good survival instincts, and irritated with myself as a leader for getting into something that led to my capture," said Vangen reflectively.³¹ Thus, it was that he survived captivity, resisted numerous interrogations, managed to escape, evade, and avoid recapture. When Vangen escaped he was more than a hundred miles from where he was originally captured and thirty miles from his unit which was on the right



*XVI Corps
SSI*



*2nd Infantry
Division SSI*



*Korean Military
Advisory Group
SSI*



101st and 33rd Military Government Group orderly rooms. CPT Vangen is on the right.

flank of the 2nd Infantry Division that was part of V Corps. It took more than two days for him to rejoin his regiment because the 76th Infantry had relieved 4th Armored Division in the VIII Corps area. "I vividly remembered that our first KIA overseas was the result of friendly fire. That's why I was being so cautious when I approached those American troops in the woods that final day," added Vangen.³²

Epilogue: The war in Europe ended less than a month later and just six months after the 76th Infantry Division crossed the English Channel to France. As a former prisoner, CPT Terry Vangen was given priority to return home, but not released from active duty. Because he was a U.S. Army Reserve indefinite officer, he was sent to the Army's Military Government School at Carlisle



Mokpo Orphans School, 1947. L to R- Sheryl Vangen, 1LT Robert Malley, Father Henry, Sharon Vangen, and Mary Vangen.

Barracks, Pennsylvania, in the fall of 1945, for two months. The military government and occupation model being taught at Carlisle Barracks was the European one just as it had been after WWI and during and after WWII in Europe. CPT Vangen found that the school training had little relevance when he was assigned to the 101st Military Government Group in Korea in 1946. Vangen and his family spent almost three years in occupied South Korea.³³

For this reason he was sought by the United Nations Civil Assistance Command, Korea (UNCACK) when the war broke out. COL Charles Munske selected him to accompany his team to P'yongyang, North Korea, in late October 1950, to form a short-lived UN military government in the Communist capital city. Vangen was

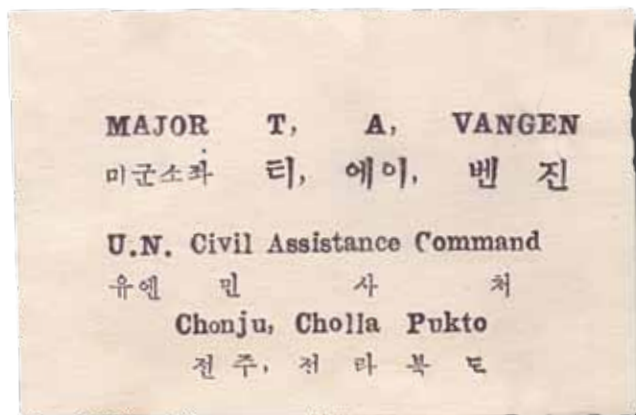
Korean refugees filled the UNCACK Convalescence Center at Chonju.





101st Military Government Group families enroute to a picnic in the "family car" in Chonju, 1947. L to R- Mrs. Mary Vangen, Mrs. Novotney, Mrs. Curtis, two Vangen daughters in scarves (Sheryl and Sharon), unknown boy, and 1LT Novotney.

slated to be the Public Welfare Officer. Their convoy of military government personnel was among the last to leave P'yongyang the day before Communist Chinese Forces recaptured the North Korean city (5 December 1950).³⁴ CPT Vangen celebrated the New Year in Taegu before being reassigned to Chonju in Challo Puk-to province where his Economics Officer was 1LT John Montgomery Belk (later the CEO of three hundred department stores in the southeast, southwest, and mid-Atlantic United States).³⁵ LTC Terrance A. Vangen retired from the Army in 1958, after three years as the U.S. Army post commander for Worms/Rhine, Germany. After twenty-five years with the Civil Defense Preparedness Agency (DPA) he retired again. Today, he spends the warm months in his hometown, Pengilly, MN, and the winters in Orange Beach, Alabama. ♠



UNCACK calling card for MAJ Terry Vangen.



Post WWII South Korean 100 won note

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CPT Vangen at rice planting vicinity of Chonju.

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76th Infantry Division soldiers return enemy fire during their drive through central Germany, April 1945.

Operation BAAZ TSUKA

Task Force 31 Returns to the Panjwayi

By Kenneth Finlayson

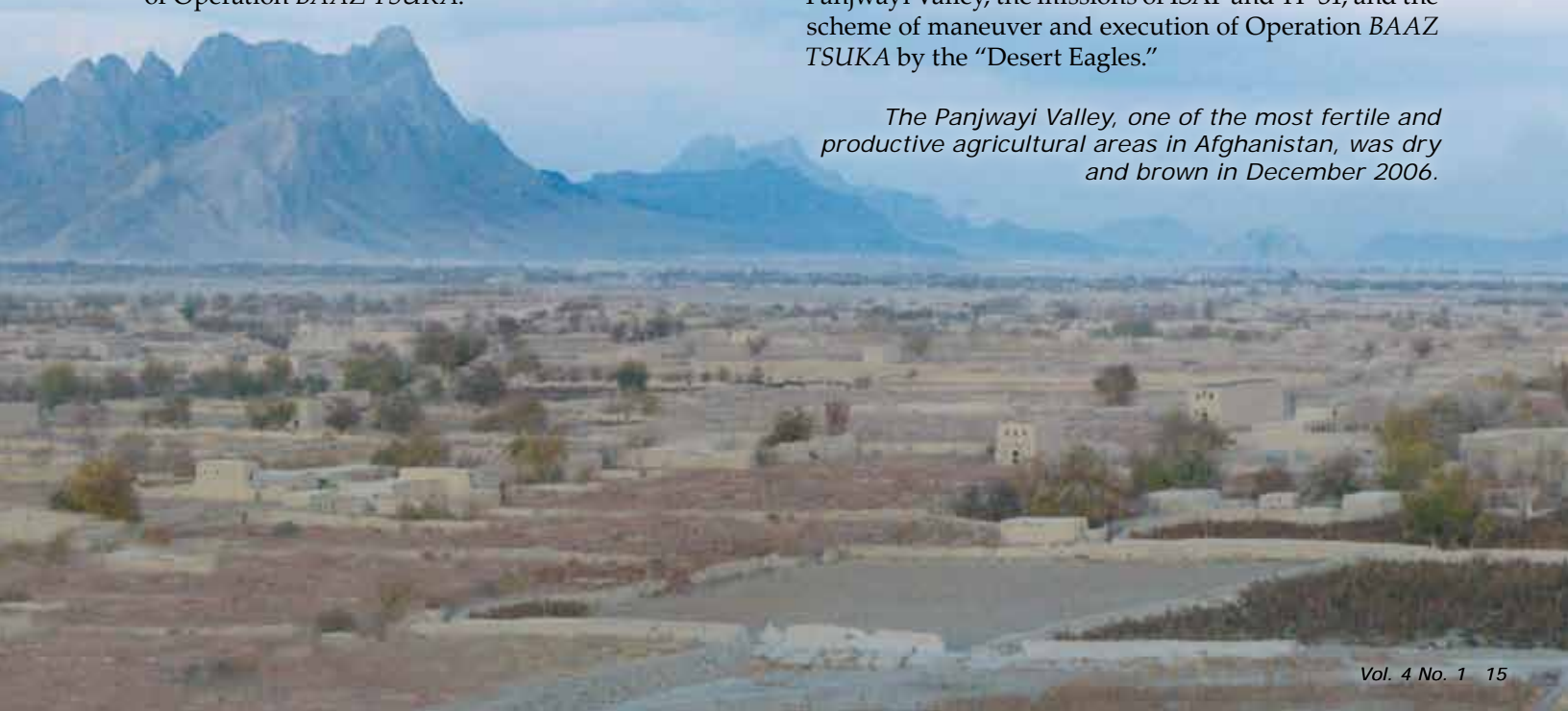
**In keeping with USSOCOM Policy, Special Operations soldiers Major and below and the named operational objectives in this article have been given pseudonyms, designated with an asterick *.*

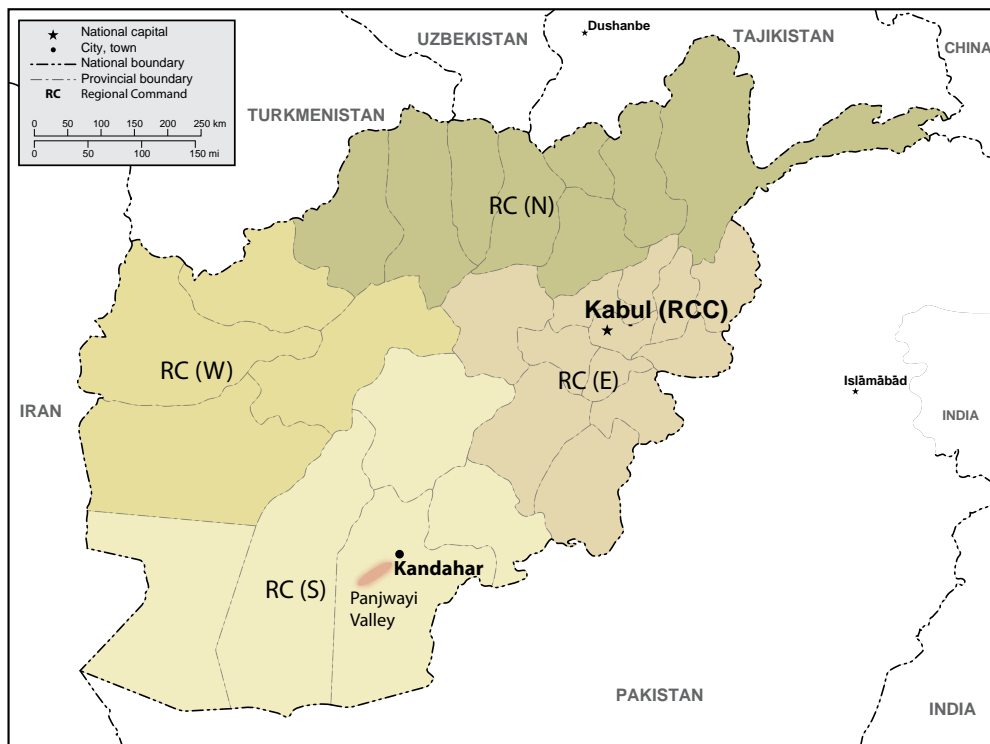
The “Gateway to Kandahar” the Panjwayi Valley is one of the most fertile and productive regions in Afghanistan. Beginning 35 kilometers southwest of the ancient provincial capital city of Kandahar, the Panjwayi extends roughly 50 kilometers south and west almost to the border of Helmand Province. Watered by the Arghandab River, the well-populated valley produces grapes, corn and other crops. It was also a traditional Taliban stronghold. The 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (SFG) returned to the heartland of the Taliban for a third time in December 2006 as part of Operation BAAZ TSUKA.

Task Force 31 (TF-31), the “Desert Eagles,” as part of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A), had spent months in the Panjwayi Valley. They had driven the Taliban out of the area during Operation MEDUSA in September 2006.¹ But NATO/ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) had failed to maintain a viable presence in the area afterward. The political constraints on combat operations imposed on the different NATO nations by their governments precluded ISAF from developing a coordinated strategy to retain control of the Panjwayi Valley. The Taliban returned in strength just weeks after the end of MEDUSA. By the end of November, the Taliban strength in the valley was estimated to be nearly 800 fighters.² In December 2006, ISAF launched Operation BAAZ TSUKA (Pashtun for “Eagle Summit”) with the goal of once again driving out the Taliban and delivering essential development assistance to the local populace.³ In the intervening three months between MEDUSA and BAAZ TSUKA, the operating situation of TF-31 had undergone some significant changes.

The purpose of this article is to document the campaign and to highlight the counterinsurgency (COIN) model employed by TF-31 during the operation. Operation BAAZ TSUKA is an example of a successful COIN operation conducted as part of a multi-national operation and is relevant as a blueprint for future operations. This article will examine the situation in the Panjwayi Valley, the missions of ISAF and TF-31, and the scheme of maneuver and execution of Operation BAAZ TSUKA by the “Desert Eagles.”

The Panjwayi Valley, one of the most fertile and productive agricultural areas in Afghanistan, was dry and brown in December 2006.





Map of ISAF Regional Commands.



Dutch Major General Ton van Loon commanded RC-South during Operation BAAZ TSUKA. He became a staunch proponent of the counterinsurgency campaign designed by TF-31.

COL Christopher K. Haas, the 3rd SFG commander, was in charge of the CJSOTF. A multi-national command, CJSOTF-A is comprised of special operations forces from twelve countries, including Canada, Great Britain, and the United Arab Emirates. It was responsible for coordinating SOF operations throughout Afghanistan. ISAF is composed of the headquarters, an Air Task Force, five Regional Commands, (RCs), 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) and Forward Support Bases throughout Afghanistan with 40 countries contributing forces.⁴ The mission of ISAF was to bring security, stability, and foster development

in Afghanistan.⁵ The five geographically oriented Regional Commands (RCs) coordinated all civil-military activities conducted by the military elements or PRTs in their respective areas of responsibility.⁶ TF-31 worked for RC-South, whose area of responsibility encompassed Oruzgan, Zabol, Kandahar, Helmand, and Nimruz provinces. After MEDUSA, Canadian Brigadier General David A. Fraser was replaced by Dutch Major General Ton van Loon on 1 November 2006. A peacekeeping veteran, Major General van Loon commanded a Dutch task force in Bosnia in the 1990's. These peacekeeping experiences initially made van Loon hesitant to get involved in major combat operations.

In Bosnia, the Croatian, Serbian, and Bosnian elements were separated into discrete ethnic enclaves that helped the NATO peacekeeping forces keep the warring factions apart. Humanitarian aid (HA) could be provided to all groups in relatively secure environments. Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Donald C. Bolduc, the commander of TF-31, worked diligently to convince MG van Loon that solving the problems in southern Afghanistan involved a balance of combat operations and HA. "One of the biggest obstacles was to convince MG van Loon that there could be no



*Task Force 31
Unofficial Insignia*



ISAF SSI



3rd SFG Flash

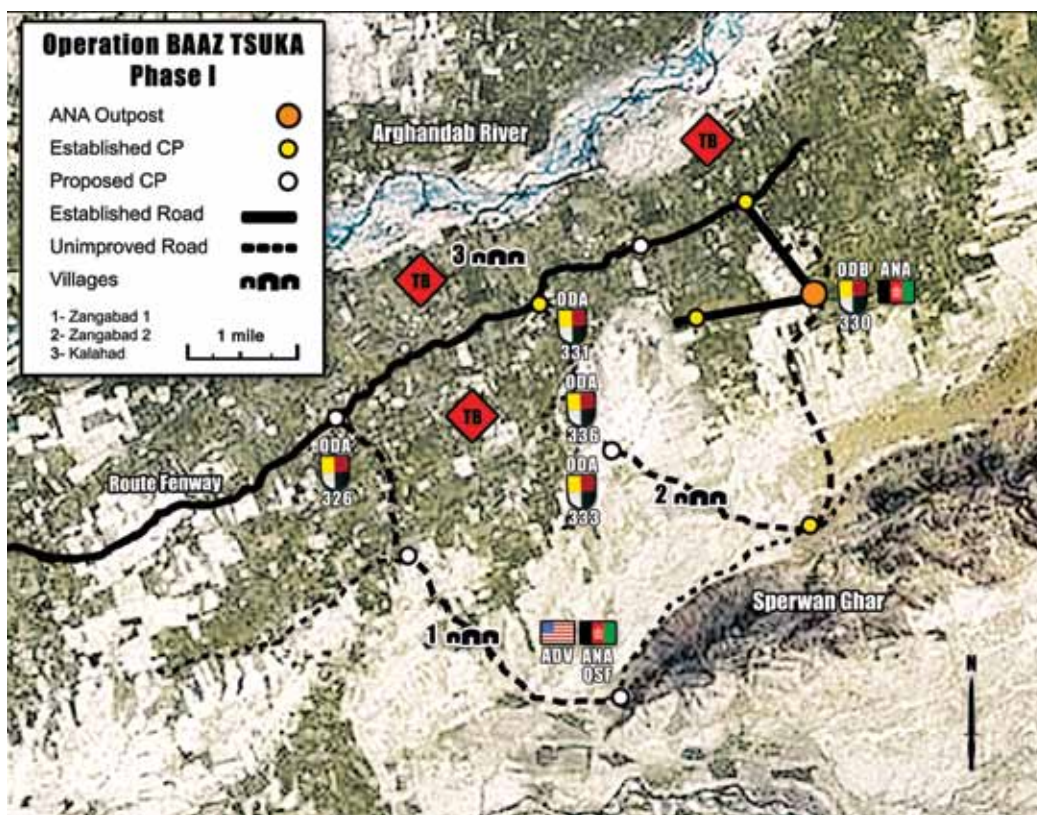
development without security,” said LTC Bolduc. “An active insurgency will not allow support to the locals. We needed to balance kinetic and non-kinetic [combat vs non-combat] operations in an intelligence-driven, full-spectrum campaign. It took about thirty days for him to realize this.”⁷ With van Loon’s support, the staff of TF-31 planned to conquer the valley again.

Operation *BAAZ TSUKA* was a two-phased campaign designed to achieve three important objectives. In Phase I, U.S. and Canadian forces in concert with Afghan National Army (ANA) units would assault from east to west to secure villages in the valley. The Canadians would move down Highway 1 to secure the town of Howz-E-Madad, north of the Arghandab River, and the U.S. forces would take the towns of Zangabad and Talukan on the south side.⁸ In Phase II, the Canadians would clear the villages of Siah Choi, Nalgham, and Sangasar. Then a company of Dutch infantry, assisted by the U.S. forces, would conduct an airmobile insertion to secure the town of Mushan at the western end of the Panjwayi Valley.⁹ In both phases, the ANA companies would constitute the bulk of the forces.

The first mission was to conduct direct combat operations to drive the Taliban out of their strongholds in the Panjwayi Valley. The



Canadian troops of TF-Kandahar receiving an operations briefing during Operation BAAZ TSUKA. TF-Kandahar executed the supporting attack that seized the town of Howz-E-Madad.



Phase I of Operation BAAZ TSUKA.



*Royal Canadian
Regimental Crest*



*Lord Strathcona's
Horse Crest*



*Dutch 12th Infantry
Battalion Crest*



TF-31 personnel used ATVs to guide the trucks hauling logistical supplies.

second mission was to provide HA and the third was to establish an Afghan security presence in the valley to enhance the local infrastructure and protect the residents from Taliban retaliation. This time the U.S. forces would be the main effort. At the same time, A Company 1/3 SFG was conducting combat patrols and delivering HA in Zabel Province as was B Company 1/3 in Oruzgan Province.¹⁰ In Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*, U.S. Special Forces would be working with Canadian and Dutch forces.

Providing humanitarian aid, reconstruction and development assistance, and establishing a long-term security presence were major goals of Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*.¹¹ TF-31 support personnel delivered more than five tons of food, clothing, and supplies to the villages during the course of the operation.¹² The primary methods used by the ODB to meet the logistical needs of the teams were ATVs (All-Terrain Vehicles) to guide trucks carrying supplies or aerial resupply by CH-47 Chinook. Simultaneously with the delivery of humanitarian materials, the Task Force executed a comprehensive Information Operations (IO) campaign to counter Taliban propaganda.

"My task force IO team had Civil Affairs guys, a Psychological Operations team from 4th Psychological Operations Group [attached from the CJSOTF], my intel and plans officers, representatives from the State Department and USAID [United States Agency for International Development], and representatives from the Afghans, British and Canadians. They met regularly to develop plans and methods to counter the enemy message," said LTC Bolduc. "The IO campaign was



Canadian Leopard C2 tank and LAV III fighting vehicle in overwatch. The 1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment was augmented with the tanks of Lord Strathcona's Horse.

tied into the ground operations. It was a case of using the direct and indirect approaches simultaneously."¹³ The effects of the IO campaign were far-reaching.

Operational Detachment-Bravo (ODB) 330, (C Company 1/3 SFG), would lead the TF-31 effort as it had done in MEDUSA. Major (MAJ) Jamie Hall* had four Operational Detachments Alpha (ODAs), 331, 333, 336, and 384 (from B Co 3/3 SFG), and three Afghan National Army (ANA) companies from the 205th Battalion.¹⁴ Each ANA "company" was a thirty-man unit armed with AK-47 rifles, light machine guns, and RPG (Rocket Propelled Grenade) launchers. The ANA travelled in Ford Ranger pick-up trucks.¹⁵ A seven-man Forward Logistics Element (FLE) from 1/3 SFG would handle the support for the operation. ODB 330 would be the main effort. The ODB's mission was to attack in a westerly direction along the south side of the Arghandab River and clear

A platoon of three Canadian 155mm towed howitzers was attached to ODB 330. From their firebase on Sperwan Ghar, the artillery provided fire support to the SF teams as they advanced down the valley on the south side of the river.





The restrictive terrain forced the SF teams to move dismounted supported by their ATVs. The larger ground mobility vehicles (GMVs) were restricted to the main roads between the villages.

the contested area of Taliban fighters, seize the enemy controlled territory and secure the gains by establishing checkpoints manned by the ANA and Afghan National Police (ANP).¹⁶ ODA 384 with the engineers and reconnaissance platoon would be responsible for keeping the main road, Route FENWAY*, cleared and secure.

The supporting effort was led by Canadian forces of Task Force Kandahar (the 1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment) who attached an engineer platoon, a reconnaissance platoon, and three 155mm howitzers to provide support to ODB 330. TF-Kandahar would conduct a supporting attack west along Highway 1 by the

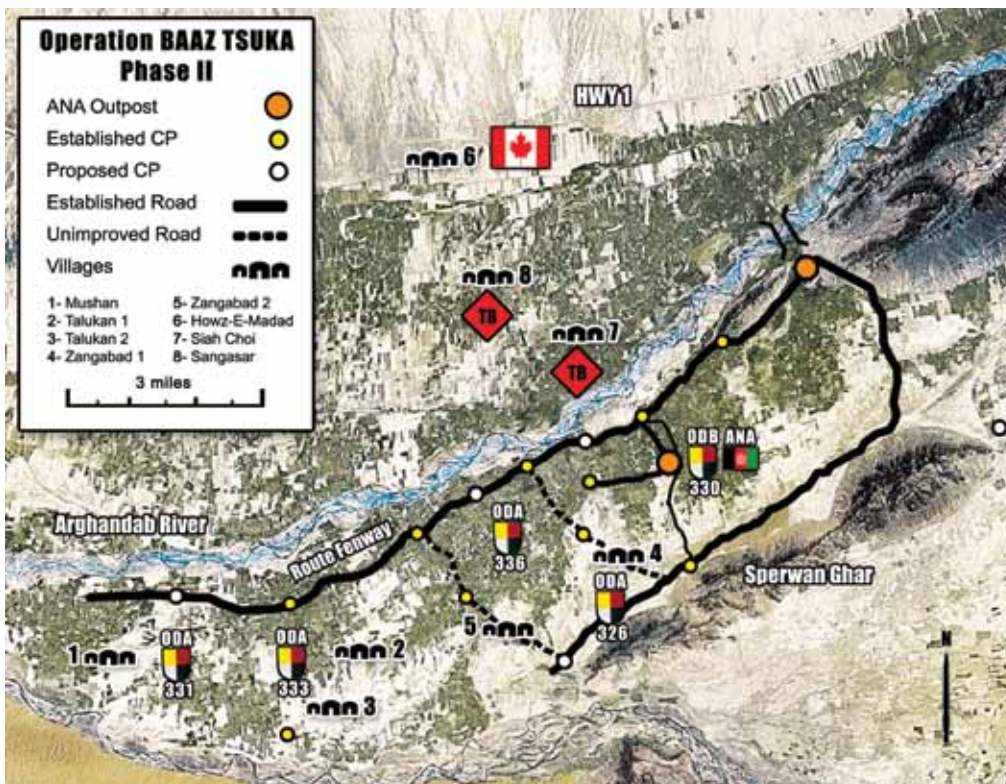
1st Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment mounted in LAV III light armored vehicles with an attached company of Leopard C2 tanks of Lord Strathcona's Horse. An infantry company team remained in the vicinity of Ma'sum Ghar at the east end of the valley. The Canadian forces were to attack on the north side of the river to secure the town of Howz-E-Madad on Highway 1 and on order, the towns of Sangasar and Siah Choi.¹⁷ The success of the main and supporting attacks would lead into the second phase of BAAZ TSUKA.

When the U.S. and Canadian forces secured their objectives, a company of Dutch infantry from the 12th Battalion (Air Assault) Royal Netherlands Army, would air assault into Mushan at the western end of the valley to interdict the Taliban communications and logistics center and establish contact with the city elders to coordinate the distribution of humanitarian assistance.¹⁸ Throughout the operation there would be a screening force to the south of the U.S sector made up of a company of ANA with U.S. advisors. At the western end of the valley, British Special Operations Forces from the adjacent Helmand Province provided another screening force and assisted with displaced civilians.¹⁹ After receiving approval from the CJSOTF and RC-South commanders, LTC Bolduc briefed the concept to the ISAF staff, and with MG van Loon's approval, prepared to launch Operation BAAZ TSUKA on 15 December, 2006.

MAJ Hall initially located the ODB headquarters element with the attached Canadian engineers, artillery, and reconnaissance elements on Sperwan Ghar, the hilltop firebase established after Operation MEDUSA.

From this dominant position he could observe the entire valley and direct close air support (CAS) and the artillery fires. Three ODAs, each with an ANA company, were arrayed abreast with ODA 331 on the right along the south bank of the Arghandab River, ODA 336 in the center, and ODA 333 in the south.²⁰ Route FENWAY* paralleled the south bank of the river and was the principal western axis of advance through the valley. That was the responsibility of ODA 384 and the Route Clearing Team made up of the Canadian recon and engineer platoons and TF-31 support personnel.²¹

The constricted terrain in the valley, small villages with interconnected mud-brick walls, irrigation



Phase II of Operation BAAZ TSUKA.

ditches and few roads, forced the teams to advance dismounted and clear each building individually. Unlike in September 2006 during Operation MEDUSA when the fields and vineyards were green and growing, in December these same fields were fallow and brown, providing better visibility. "The temperatures had gone from the 100's in MEDUSA to the 20's now," said MAJ Hall.²² Also unlike MEDUSA, the Taliban did not confront the advancing U.S. and ANA units.

The heavy losses suffered by the Taliban in MEDUSA caused them to change their tactics.²³ "The Taliban learned not to stand and fight," said Sergeant First Class (SFC) Dan Sterling* of ODA 331. "They had to try to negate the effects of the CAS."²⁴ Both ODA 333 and ODA 336 made contact on the first night as they pushed forward, clearing the hill mass of Zandabar Ghar and the small villages of Zangabad One and Two.²⁵ The Taliban withdrew when the teams approached. They abandoned

"...The process of clearing each building was very deliberate and time consuming."

caches and dug-in defensive positions leaving behind booby traps to slow the Coalition forces.

Captain (CPT) John Burns* was the team leader of ODA 331. "From Day Two forward we had a hard time maintaining momentum dismounted. The process of clearing each building was very deliberate and time consuming. We ended up going back and bringing up the GMVs (Ground Mobility Vehicles) so we could move on Route FENWAY," said Burns. "ODA 333 pushed on dismounted to clear [the villages of] Talukan One and Two."²⁶ On 17 December, ODA 326 replaced ODA 384 and continued the clearing and security mission on Route FENWAY. ODA 326 came from B Company, 1/3rd SFG. ODA 384 returned to 3/3 SFG in northern Afghanistan.²⁷

As each village was cleared, the teams would gather the elders for a *shura* (village council meeting) to explain the plan for providing security and support. This helped to gain the support of the local populace. The SF teams were delivering HA even as they drove the Taliban out of their strongholds. "We were dumping food and clothing off the trucks as we moved through," said CPT Burns. "We were using every means we could to establish rapport with the locals."²⁸ As the teams advanced westward and secured their objectives, the sustainment effort moved into high gear.

The support effort was led by CPT Peter Thomas* the 1/3 SFG Headquarters Company Commander from the TF-31 base at Kandahar. With CPT Josh Hardy* the TF-31 Support Detachment Commander and First Lieutenant (1LT) Cody Mathews* the FLE Officer-in-Charge (OIC), pushed HA and combat sustainment supplies to ODB 330 as well as the TF-31 units in the other



Clearing the villages building by building was a slow demanding operation. As the Taliban retreated, they left behind numerous caches and booby traps.



In each village, the teams conducted a shura with the village elders to explain the plan for providing security and humanitarian aid.



Distributing food, clothing and supplies in the villages was a key component of Operation BAAZ TSUKA. More than five tons of aid was distributed to the villagers in the valley.



CH-47 Chinook "Log Bird" hauling supplies for TF-31 from the Kandahar Airfield. Aerial resupply was a vital element in keeping team momentum during Operation BAAZ TSUKA.

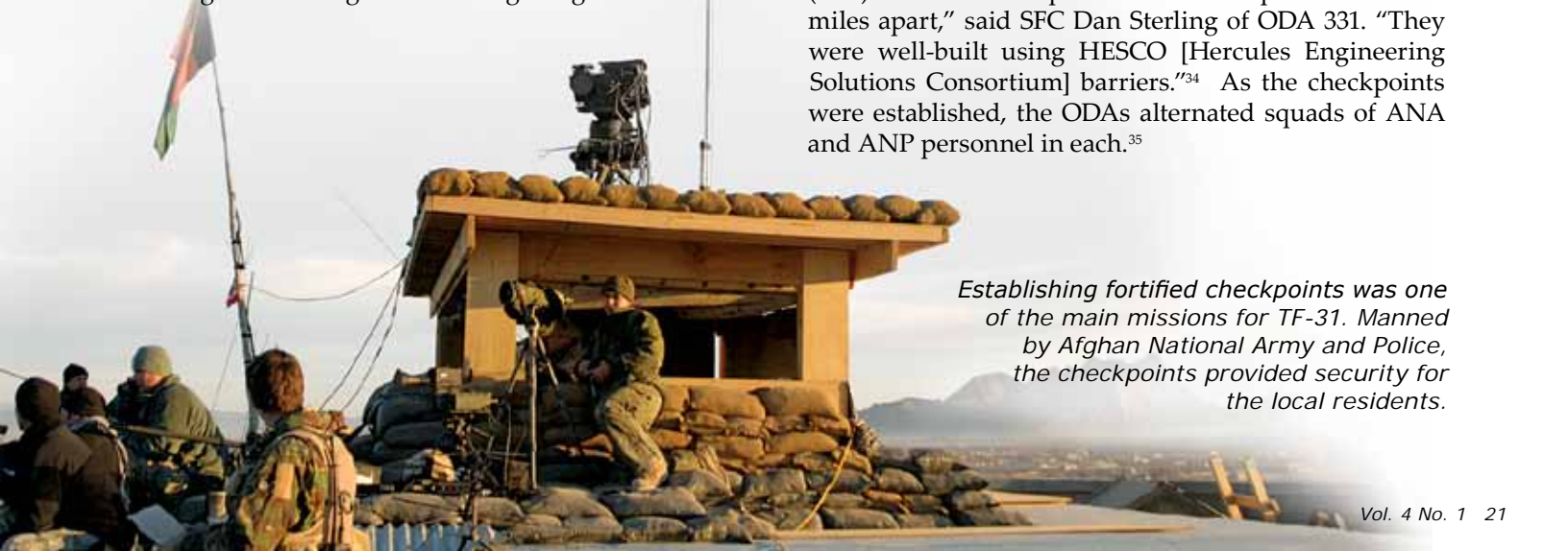
provinces. "These leaders and their men did brigade-level resupply operations," said LTC Bolduc. "They trained the Afghans to pack bundles, deliver supplies, and conduct their own resupply operations as well as push supplies out to the firebases for their own troops and the coalition."²⁹ The Field Liaison Element (FLE) supported ODB 330 with maintenance and medical support as well as delivering supplies to the teams and the villages. Providing HA to the villages supported the IO campaign to counter the Taliban.

Beginning on the third day of operations, the Governor of Kandahar Province started broadcasting radio messages from Kandahar, and the local newspapers ran articles about the development programs in the Panjwayi.³⁰ CPT Burns of ODA 331 noted that having the right individual on the ground was also important. "Our ANA battalion commander, LTC Risuli, was a key guy. He was an old *mujahideen* who had fought the Soviets and he was a real politician. He was vital in talking to the village elders and getting their assistance

in executing the support programs."³¹ The third objective of Operation BAAZ TSUKA, was to provide long-term security for the local populace. This began in stages as the teams pushed the Taliban westward.

The establishment of fortified checkpoints to be manned by the ANA or Afghan National Police (ANP) was an integral part of the operation. The failure to establish checkpoints was a major shortcoming after Operation MEDUSA. "Checkpoints were not set up after MEDUSA," said SFC Peter Carney* of ODA 336. "The coalition dragged their feet on setting up the checkpoints and this allowed the Taliban to come back into the valley."³² As the teams pushed westward down the valley, the Route Clearing Team (ODA 326 with Canadian engineers and recon personnel) followed, establishing checkpoints at key locations along Route FENWAY and in the villages.

The Canadian engineers attached to ODB 330 from TF-Kandahar constructed modular checkpoints under the direction of the TF-31 Forward Logistics Element (FLE).³³ "The checkpoints were set up three or four miles apart," said SFC Dan Sterling of ODA 331. "They were well-built using HESCO [Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium] barriers."³⁴ As the checkpoints were established, the ODAs alternated squads of ANA and ANP personnel in each.³⁵



Establishing fortified checkpoints was one of the main missions for TF-31. Manned by Afghan National Army and Police, the checkpoints provided security for the local residents.



The Dutch airmobile force landed in two Royal Netherlands Army CH-47 Chinook helicopters to secure the village of Mushan on 23 December 2006. The landing zone had been occupied the day prior by U.S. and Canadian forces.

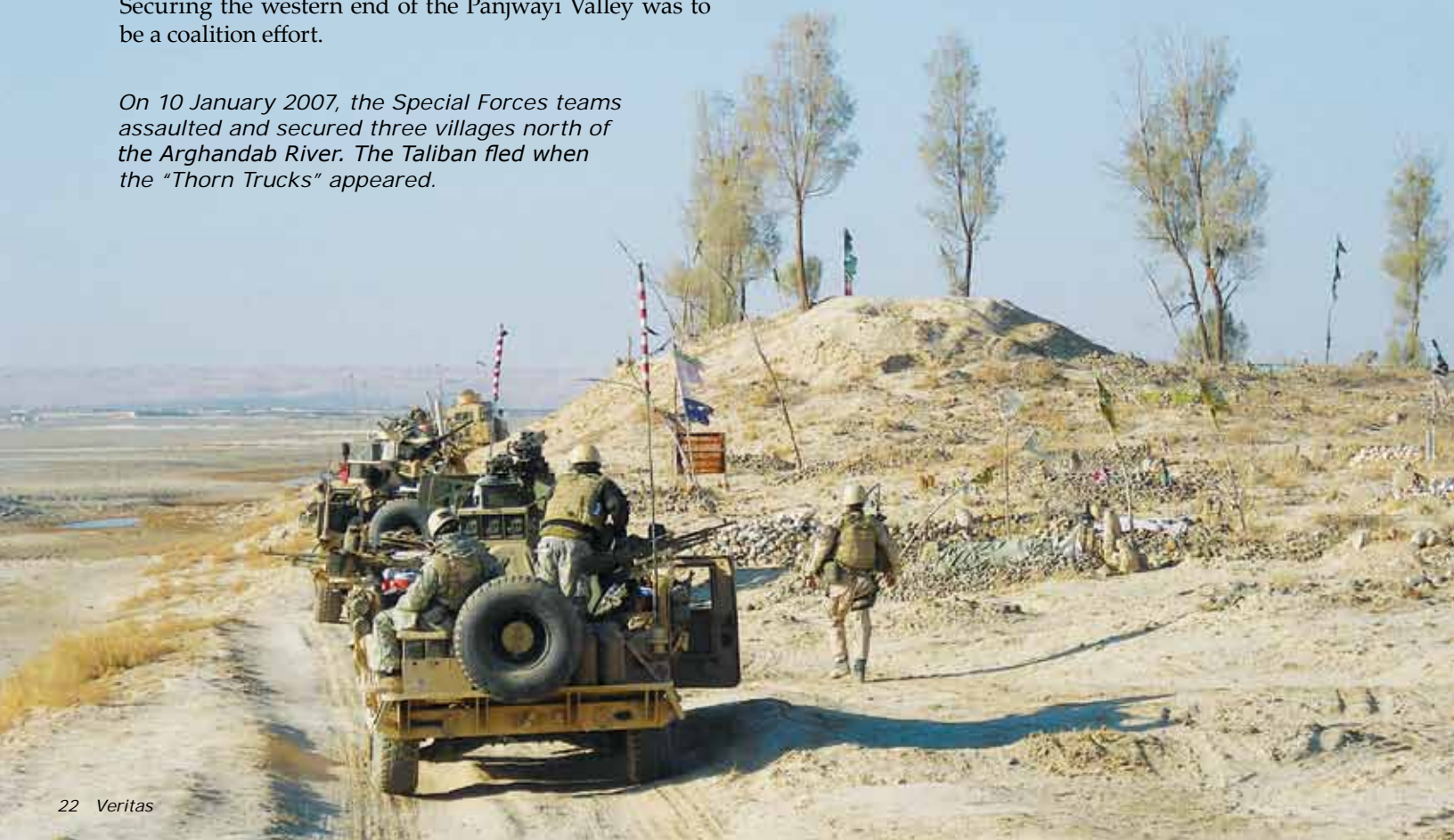
CPT John Burns said “each checkpoint was set up for six to eight guys. Sometimes as many as twenty would be on the checkpoint and it became a losing battle with numbers as these guys were coming out of the ANA battalion ranks.” Of the two forces manning the checkpoints, “The ANA had good training and we had good rapport with them. The police were not as well trained. The police chief was supportive of the plan, but he needed more resources.”³⁶ Placing the police checkpoints between those manned by the better trained ANA proved to be the best method to aid the police.³⁷ Ultimately 18 checkpoints were established in the U.S. sector of the Panjwayi Valley (TF-Kandahar established 14 checkpoints) during Operation BAAZ TSUKA.³⁸ The last was set up at the town of Mushan. Securing the western end of the Panjwayi Valley was to be a coalition effort.

On 10 January 2007, the Special Forces teams assaulted and secured three villages north of the Arghandab River. The Taliban fled when the “Thorn Trucks” appeared.



These ruined buildings were a weapons cache complex near Zangabar Ghar. The cache was one of many found by the Special Forces teams during Operation BAAZ TSUKA. Taliban forces depended on their caches during combat.

The air assault by the Dutch infantry company took place on 22 December 2006. On the day prior, ODA 331 escorted a company-sized task force of Canadian tanks and light armor from Ma’sum Ghar down Route FENWAY to the designated landing zone on the eastern edge of the town. “The Canadians did not want to move over an uncleared route so we escorted them with the GMVs,” said CPT John Burns, the ODA commander. “The Taliban are deathly afraid of the GMVs; they call them ‘Thorn Trucks.’”³⁹ Despite the incongruity of the lightly armored GMVs leading the Leopard tanks and LAVs, the task force secured the landing zone and prepared to receive the Dutch airmobile force.



The Dutch infantry landed in their two CH-47 Chinook helicopters after a flight down the valley from Sperwan Ghar. The infantry moved into the village, and secured the area. They conducted a *shura* with the assembled village elders and distributed a token sample of humanitarian aid. The next day, they left the area. The SF ODAs established the final checkpoint in Mushan.⁴⁰ “We [ODA 331] spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in the burned out clinic in Mushan,” said CPT Burns.⁴¹ On Christmas Day, the forces of ODB 330 were deployed throughout the valley south of the river. ODA 331 was in Mushan, ODA 326 was to the east in the village of Talukan One and ODA 333 was in Talukan Two with ODA 336 further east in Zangabad where they found a significant Taliban cache. The ODB with the Canadian attachments was on Zandabar Ghar, the hill mass in the center of the sector.⁴² At this time, the ODB had successfully completed Phases I and II and secured their designated objectives and ODA 326 returned to B Company 1/3 SFG. But, the Panjwayi Valley was not yet cleared.

The Canadian TF-Kandahar had occupied their initial objective, the town of Howz-E-Madad astride Highway 1 at the start of Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*. There they established a static defensive position. None of the follow-on objectives, notably the towns of Sangasar, Nalgham, and Siah Choi were taken. TF-Kandahar, with the exception of the small task force that was escorted by ODA 331 to Mushan, had not advanced outside of Howz-E-Madad. Significant pockets of the Taliban were still in the three towns and their presence endangered the security of the operations on the south side of the river. Clearing the Taliban from these villages became an unexpected Phase III for ODB 330.

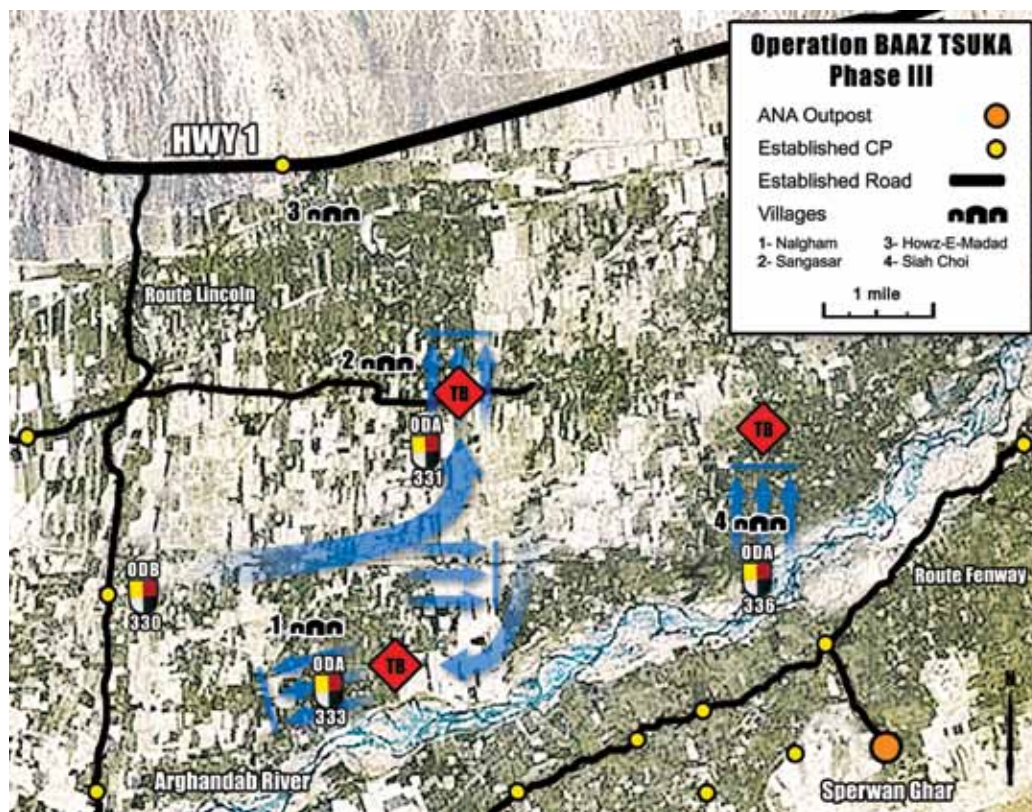
The plan to secure the villages on the north side of the Arghandab River fell to the individual team commanders in ODB 330. The necessary coordination was done by the TF-31 staff.⁴³ The basic concept was for the three ODAs and the ANA to push into the villages from the south. They would be relieved by TF-Kandahar after securing their objectives. TF-Kandahar would provide artillery support for the operation, which commenced on 10 January 2007.⁴⁴

“Initially the Canadians did not think we could

clear the villages with just the teams and the ANA,” said CPT John Burns.⁴⁵ SFC Peter Carney was a liaison to the Canadian forces at Howz-E-Madad. “The Canadian troops were pretty aggressive, but their commanders were not. One IED would stop them cold,” said Carney.⁴⁶ Carney worked diligently to get the Canadian forces to follow up the SF assaults.

On 9 January 2007 ODB 330 moved from Zandabar Ghar to a position west of Nalgham on Route LINCOLN*, the north-south route connecting Highway 1 with Route FENWAY. The SF teams moved into the villages on 10 January with ODA 331 assaulting Sangasar, ODA 333 taking Nalgham, and ODA 336 moving on Siah Choi.⁴⁷ By 11 January, all three objectives had been taken and the Taliban were driven from their strongholds and fled the valley. The teams conducted *shuras* with the village elders to establish the HA programs and on the 11th were relieved by Canadian forces in Sangasar and Siah Choi. The Dutch infantry, under the operational control of TF-31 since 7 January, reentered the operation and relieved ODA 333 in Nalgham. The Dutch later turned the town over to TF-Kandahar. Following the successful capture of the villages, the ODB deployed back to Sperwan Ghar.⁴⁸ As they were relieved, the teams also moved back to Sperwan Ghar to refit and rearm prior to continuing the mission of incorporating the ANA into the security operations and the manning of the checkpoints.⁴⁹

With the area north of the river secured, Operation *BAAZ TSUKA* accomplished the mission of driving the



Phase III of Operation *BAAZ TSUKA*.



By 11 January 2007, the teams had cleared the towns north of the river and were relieved by Canadian and Dutch forces. The seizure of the towns completed the mission of driving the Taliban out of the Panjwayi Valley.

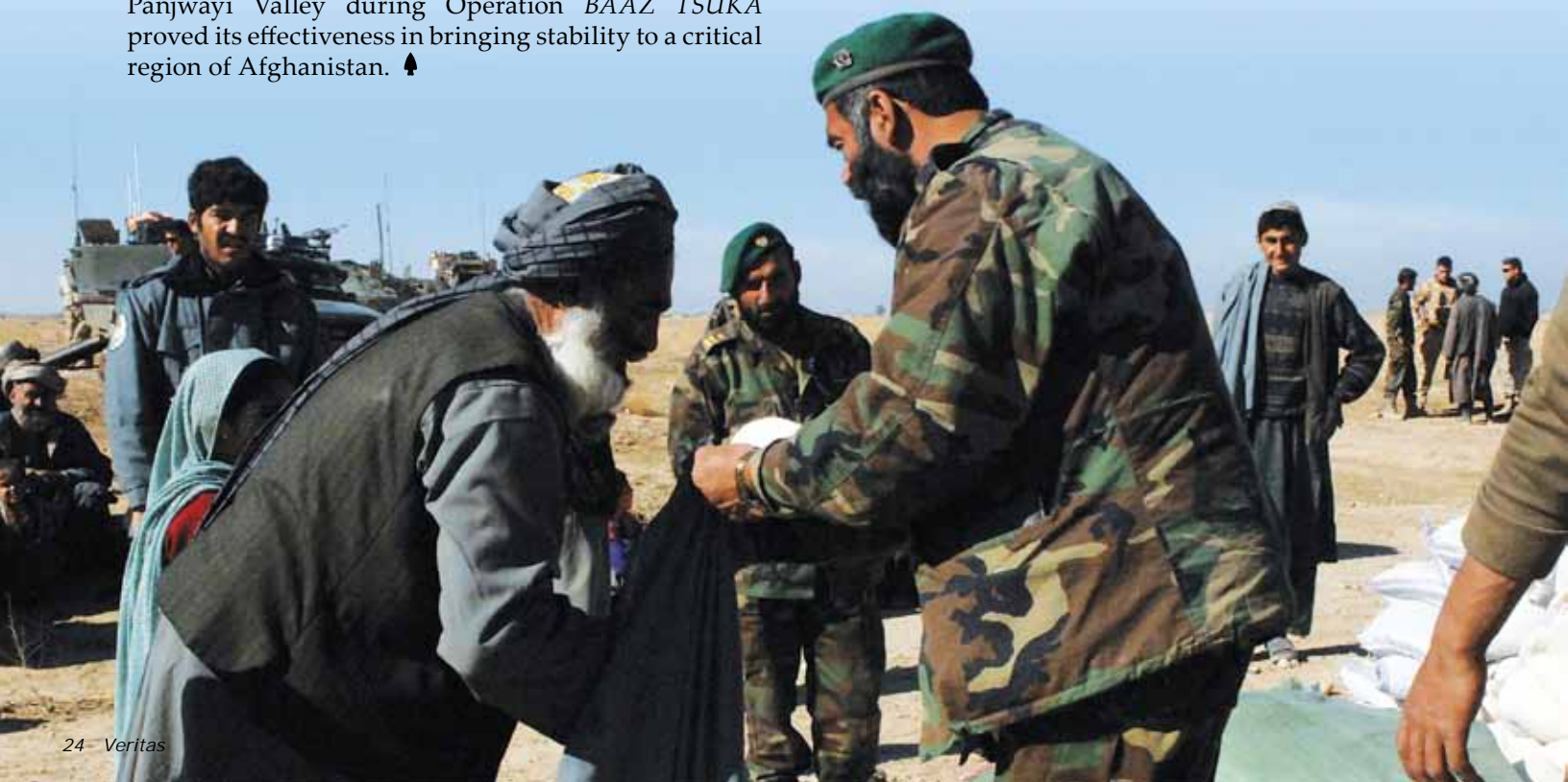
Taliban out of the valley and establishing the network of checkpoints needed to provide for the long-term security of the residents of the valley. In the aftermath of Operation BAAZ TSUKA, thousands of displaced civilians began to move back into the Panjwayi. As the locals returned, there was a positive reaction to the improved security situation as evidenced by the willingness of the residents to report the planting of IEDs and cache locations to the Afghan forces.⁵⁰ The combination of direct combat operations against the Taliban, coupled with the establishment of security measures to protect the local populace and the dedicated program of economic development, was the key to transforming a passive population into one that actively opposed the insurgent forces in the area. The counterinsurgency model pursued by TF-31 in the Panjwayi Valley during Operation BAAZ TSUKA proved its effectiveness in bringing stability to a critical region of Afghanistan. ♣



New clothing for a young Afghani. Providing supplies of food and clothing was instrumental in turning a passive population into one supportive of the Coalition effort.

The author would like to thank Major Alan D. Meyer for his assistance in the collection of information for this article and to the Desert Eagles who generously contributed their time.

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Allied Long Range Penetration Groups for Burma:

The Chindits, the Marauders, and the MARS Task Force.

by Troy J. Sacquety

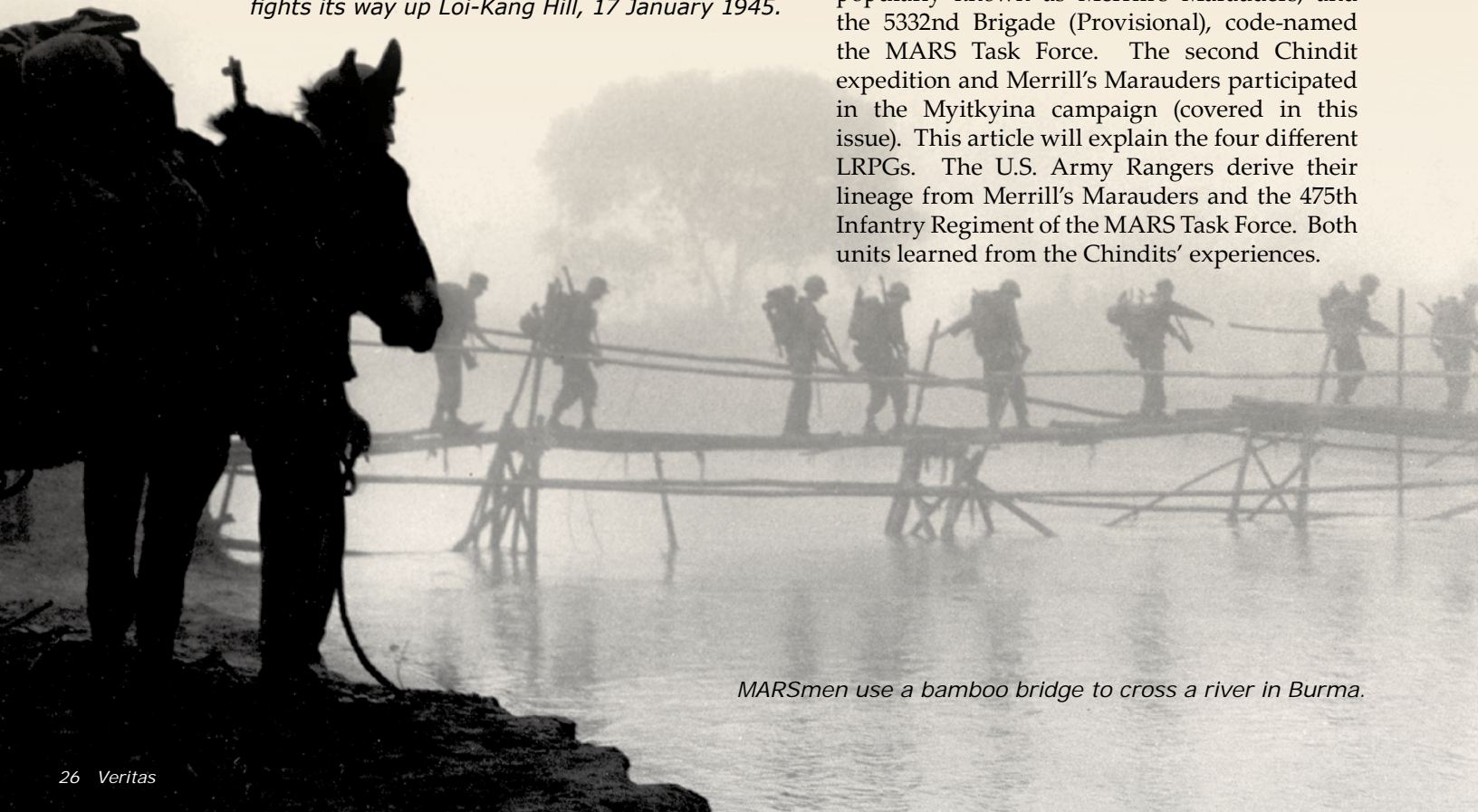


The LRPGs in Burma relied on aerial resupply and pack mules.



The 2nd Battalion, 475th Infantry, MARS Task Force, fights its way up Loi-Kang Hill, 17 January 1945.

Although an under-resourced theater in WWII, Burma was blessed with a plethora of special operations units. One military example was the Long Range Penetration Group (LRPG) that harassed enemy forces and interdicted supply lines behind enemy lines. The LRPG was a British concept that was also adopted by the Americans. The British and Americans each had two separate LRPGs in the Burma Campaign. The British had the first and second Chindits, while the Americans had the 5307th Composite Group (Provisional), the GALAHAD Task Force, popularly known as Merrill's Marauders, and the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional), code-named the MARS Task Force. The second Chindit expedition and Merrill's Marauders participated in the Myitkyina campaign (covered in this issue). This article will explain the four different LRPGs. The U.S. Army Rangers derive their lineage from Merrill's Marauders and the 475th Infantry Regiment of the MARS Task Force. Both units learned from the Chindits' experiences.



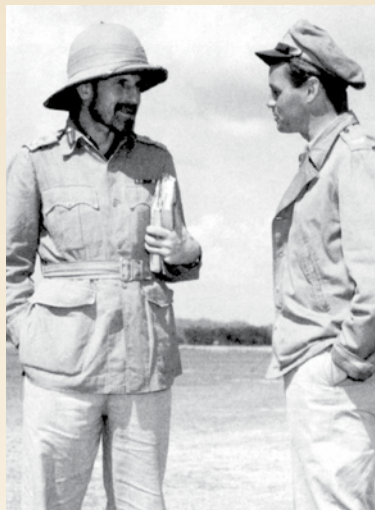
MARSmen use a bamboo bridge to cross a river in Burma.



BG James "Mad Mike" Calvert (with slung Enfield SMLE rifle) gestures as LTC Shaw (with U.S. M1 carbine) looks on.



Chindit Patch



MG Orde C. Wingate (L) formed and led the Chindits until his death in a plane crash near Imphal on 24 March 1944. His death threw the Chindit command into confusion. On the right is LTC Phillip G. Cochran of the 1st Air Commando.



Chindits lay explosives on a rail line in Japanese-occupied Burma. A key mission for the Chindits was to destroy enemy lines of communication.

The Chindits: Named after the *Chinthe*, a mythical lion-like creature depicted by the statues that guard Buddhist temple gates in Burma, the Chindits were the brainchild of the experienced, but unorthodox and controversial British Major General Orde C. Wingate. He created the Special Night Squads, a joint British-Jewish force of irregulars that operated against Arab insurgents in Palestine from 1936-38. He also formed and advised the Gideon Force against the Italians in Ethiopia in 1940-41. It was composed of forces loyal to Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie. In 1942 General Earl Wavell, Commander-in-Chief in India, brought Wingate to train the 77th Indian Infantry Brigade to operate behind the lines in Burma. Wingate led the 3,000-man Chindits into Burma

in February 1943 (Operation LONGCLOTH). For almost two months, seven separate Chindit columns harassed Japanese forces and interdicted supply lines south of Myitkyina. In late March, Wingate ordered the columns to break into small groups and make their way back into India. Though the Chindits lost a third of their men, LONGCLOTH raised British morale.

The behind the lines operation demonstrated that a large long-range force could be wholly supported by air and that the average British soldier was equal to the Japanese in the jungle. The Chindit success prompted the American military to form similar units. During the August 1943 QUADRANT Conference of Allied leaders in Quebec, Canada, the U.S. agreed to form GALAHAD. The U.S. also committed to form the 1st Air Commando to operate in conjunction with the second Chindit operation.

Wingate returned from Quebec to train a second expedition that he dubbed the "Special Force," or "Long Range Penetration Group." Although officially known as the 3rd Indian Infantry Division, the unit retained the Chindit name. Five of its six brigades went into Burma; one was withheld to help blunt the Japanese U-GO offensive into India. The second Chindit force entered Burma in two phases. Brigadier General Bernard E. Fergusson and the 16th Infantry Brigade (3,000 men) began walking into Burma on 5 February 1944. They had a 360-mile march to Indaw, their rally point. The initial contingent of the main Chindit body, commanded by BG James "Mad Mike" Calvert, flew by gliders to a landing strip south of Myitkyina code-named BROADWAY, during the night of 5 March as part of Operation THURSDAY. Nearly 9,250 Chindits were eventually landed deep behind enemy lines by the 1st Air Commando, a specially-created United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) unit, with fighters,

light bombers, transports, liaison aircraft, gliders and helicopters. Lieutenant Colonels John R. Alison and Philip G. Cochran formed the unit to resupply the Chindits and to evacuate their wounded and sick.

Shortly after Wingate died in a plane crash near Imphal, India, (24 March 1944) LTG William J. Slim, the British 14th Army commander, transferred the Chindit force to LTG Joseph W. Stilwell. They were to cut the Japanese supply lines to Myitkyina from the south. Once in Burma, however, the Chindits met stiff resistance from the Japanese and suffered heavy losses. But, they prevented enemy forces from reinforcing Myitkyina. By the time the Chindits were withdrawn to India in August 1944, they had suffered 1,400 killed and 2,500 wounded. Over half of the remainder had to be hospitalized because of illness or exhaustion. The force was disbanded in February 1945.¹

The Marauders: Code-named GALAHAD, the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), popularly known by the nickname Merrill's Marauders, was led by Brigadier General Franklin D. Merrill. The unit was formed from Army volunteers, combat veterans from Guadalcanal and New Guinea, experienced jungle fighters from the Caribbean Defense Command, and soldiers from the continental United States. It was a light infantry force, like today's Ranger Battalions, with machineguns, mortars, and 75mm pack howitzers.² Mules carried ammunition and food supplies, as they did for the Chindits. Their airdropped supplies came from the 10th USAAF.

The 5307th was essentially a regiment (about 3,000 personnel) with three battalions, each broken into two combat teams designated by a color. The 1st Battalion, led by LTC William L. Osborne, had the "Red" and "White" Combat Teams. The 2nd Battalion, under LTC George A. McGee, Jr., had the "Blue" and "Green" Combat Teams. The 3rd Battalion, of LTC Charles E. Beach, had the "Orange" and "Khaki" Combat Teams. Disease and combat severely attrited the battalions as they maneuvered behind enemy lines. By the time they captured the Myitkyina airfield on 17 May 1944, they were down to fifty percent strength. Many of the combat veterans in the Marauders had been under the impression that after ninety days in the field, the LRPG would be withdrawn. However, when the Chinese failed to capture the city of Myitkyina, LTG Stilwell had to retain his only American conventional ground force. By the end of May, the Marauders were evacuating seventy-five to one hundred men daily for diseases. Stilwell admitted in his diary on 30 May that "GALAHAD is just shot."³ The Marauders, like the Chindits, were one of his few reliable units and Stilwell used them long after they had ceased to be operationally effective.

Some 2,600 mostly green replacements with minimal training—derisively dubbed "New GALAHAD" by the



Marauders taking a well earned break in a drainage ditch on the side of a mountain. Behind them are some of the mules used to transport their supplies.



Merrill's Marauders Patch



Ranger Regimental Flash



BG Franklin Merrill was the commanding officer and namesake of Merrill's Marauders.



Marauders fire their 75mm pack howitzer to support infantry at Myitkyina on 27 July 1944. The spent shell casings in the foreground are from the previous nine-hours of shelling.

"old" Marauders—were flown in to fill out the unit. They too suffered heavy casualties. By the time Myitkyina fell in early August 1944, the "new" Marauder battalions were company-size. The 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) was inactivated on 10 August 1944. Many of the veterans were transferred to the 475th Infantry Regiment, in the MARS Task Force. Although not organized nor trained as Rangers in WWII, the Marauders became a legacy unit of the 75th Ranger Regiment. The colored stripes in the 75th Ranger beret flash represent the six Marauder combat teams.

The MARS Task Force: The 5332nd Brigade (Provisional) was activated on 26 July 1944 as the second American LRPC created for service in Burma. Brigadier General John P. Willey took command when BG Thomas S. Arms was injured in an automobile accident in October 1944. Like the Marauders and the second Chindit operation, the MARS Task Force fought under the American-led Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC). Although the unit was designed to be an American-Chinese composite division, it never operated with the Chinese infantry regiment. Instead, the MARS Task Force was composed of the 475th Infantry Regiment (Long Range Penetration Regiment, Special), and the 124th Cavalry Regiment (Special) of the Texas National Guard. Each had medical units, an attached Field Artillery Battalion (Pack), and quartermaster troops for support. In all, the MARS Task Force had some 5,000



The MARS Task Force moves along Loi-Kang Hill, 28 January 1945. In the upper left, a C-47 cargo aircraft flying below the MARSmen shows how the term "hills" was an understatement in Burma.



MARS Task Force Patch



75th Ranger Regimental DUI



PVT Charles H. Pelsor of E Company, 2nd Battalion, 475th Infantry Regiment fires his BAR at retreating Japanese forces caught out in the open near Tonkwa, Burma, on 15 December 1944.



A MARS Task Force crew uses its 4.2" mortar to shell Japanese positions along the Burma Road, January-February 1944.

troops. They were simply known as "MARSMen" when they entered the field in late 1944.

As with the Marauders and Chindits, supplies for the MARS Task Force were airdropped and packed by mules. Under the overall direction of the new theater commander, LTG Daniel I. Sultan, the MARS Task Force was to operate in conjunction with Chinese units. Its mission was to drive the Japanese from north Burma and to help clear a land route to China. The MARSMen fought along the trace of the Ledo Road—an overland bypass route being built to help supply China—and along the Burma Road, which was the pre-war land route that the Japanese still had under their control. The MARS Task Force fought in Burma until March 1945. By then, NCAC had cleared its area of operations. The MARSMen were then sent to China to support the American effort to train Chinese troops.

A MARSMen of note was 1LT Jack L. Knight. As the commanding officer of F Troop, 2nd Squadron, 124th Cavalry, he led an attack on a Japanese-occupied hill near Hpa-pen on 2 February 1945. Despite being wounded several times, LT Knight single-handedly knocked out five Japanese fighting bunkers. He was killed while attacking a sixth. His was the only Medal of Honor awarded in the China-Burma-India Theater for ground action. Most significantly, it was the only Medal of Honor awarded to a special operations soldier in World War II.⁴

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A Special Forces Model: OSS Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign

Part I

by Troy J. Sacquety

*"Flying the Hump, Moonlight, CBI" by Tom Lea
(Courtesy of the Army Art Collection)*

The crowning achievement in Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell's north Burma campaign from late February 1944 until 3 August 1944 was the hard-fought drive for Myitkyina (Mitch-in-aw). The multi-national operation involved American, Chinese, and British forces under Stilwell's Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC). The principal American units were the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), popularly known as Merrill's Marauders, the 10th United States Army Air Force (USAAF), the 1st Air Commando, and Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Because Detachment 101 supported all the major Allied forces, it was the only ground organization involved in all parts of the campaign. During the long fight, Detachment 101 came of age to become an indispensable asset for the Allied effort. The unit evolved from an intelligence collection and sabotage force to an effective guerrilla element.

This article is the first of two covering the roles of Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina campaign. Months before D-Day in France, Detachment 101 was conducting one of the earliest Unconventional Warfare (UW) campaigns in coordination with conventional forces. While Merrill's Marauders and the Chindits fought behind Japanese lines, they did so as conventional elements. Unlike the other forces involved, Detachment 101's participation was in three phases. During Phase

One, the preparatory period (December 1942 through early February 1944), OSS teams infiltrated into north Burma. During Phase Two, (February until 17 May 1944), Detachment 101 supported the 5307th as it maneuvered to capture the Myitkyina Airfield. The unplanned third phase (18 May to 3 August 1944) ended when the city of Myitkyina fell. This first article explains the OSS roles in the first two phases. It is relevant today because Detachment 101 with its Kachin guerrillas was the only true UW force in theater. As such, they were LTG Stilwell's force multiplier. Effective intelligence collection, liaison, and coordination of indigenous combat forces were the keys to OSS success. One needs to understand the war in Burma to appreciate the importance of the OSS effort.

War came to the British colony of Burma in late January 1942. By May 1942, Japanese forces had summarily defeated a numerically superior British, Burmese, Indian, American, and Chinese defense force. Routed Allied forces and several hundred thousand refugees fled towards the Indian frontier on foot because there were no roads or railroads leading to it from Burma. The skeletons of several thousand people littered the paths and roads used by the Allies when they marched back into Burma.

The Japanese had now isolated China. They controlled the major land route to China; the Burma Road that traced its course from Rangoon, Burma



China-Burma-India
SSI



Detachment 101
Patch



10th Air Force SSI



Ledo Road Patch

to Kunming, China. This road had been critical to resupplying China because the Japanese already occupied that country's seaports. LTG Stilwell, the U.S. China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater commander, arrived in Burma in time to lead a group of more than a hundred military and civilian Chinese, Americans, British, and Burmese to India. They were forced to walk the final 140 miles when they reached the end of the dirt road. Stilwell said, "I claim we got a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back and retake it."¹ However, this was easier said than done. Stilwell had to contend with rugged, mountainous terrain, bad weather, remoteness, the defeatism prevalent in the British Army, and Chinese politics.

North Burma was one of the toughest fighting environments in WWII. Steep mountainous terrain, the foothills of the Himalayas, dominates north Burma, making foot movement arduous. Detachment 101 discovered it often took thirty days to walk the same distance that a light plane could fly over in an hour.² The distances involved were extensive: the area of the Marauder's operations alone was nearly the size of Connecticut.³ Thick secondary-growth jungle—some of it unexplored—slowed ground movement. Leeches, mosquitoes, and diseases plagued fighting men. For instance, the 3,000-man Merrill's Marauders suffered 296 cases of malaria and 724 incidents of other diseases such as acute dysentery, and scrub typhus by 4 June 1944. They had only been in the field three months. This contrasted sharply with 424 killed, wounded, or missing during the same period.⁴ High humidity and temperatures well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit were common from March through May. The monsoon season of torrential rains lasted from June through September. Constant moisture rotted or rusted everything. "A cleaned pistol will develop rust pits in 24 hours, a pair of shoes not cleaned daily will rot in a week," read one Detachment 101 report.⁵ The CBI Theater was also at the tail end of an overtaxed logistics chain. Confusing command and control arrangements with the U.S. Army Air Forces, and the British, who had supreme command over Burma, caused some to say that the theater acronym stood for "Confusion Beyond Imagination." But, nothing compared to Stilwell's difficulties with the Chinese.

American strategy in the CBI was built around keeping China in the war. American war supplies kept the Chinese fighting. Since the Japanese controlled the Burma Road and the Chinese coast, the USAAF established an aerial resupply route (airbridge) from Assam, India to Kunming, China affectionately nicknamed "The Hump." Its route through the Himalayan mountain passes was hazardous and costly. Adverse weather and collisions with cloud-cloaked mountains caused almost daily aircraft losses. The U.S. needed an alternate solution. The obvious answer was to build another road that circumvented the Japanese-controlled Burma Road. In December 1942, U.S. Army engineers began construction on the Ledo



LTG Joseph W. Stilwell, Commanding General of the Northern Combat Area Command, consults with LTC William R. Peers in Burma, Commanding Officer of OSS Detachment 101. Stilwell's son, LTC Joseph W. Stilwell, Jr, the NCAC G-2, stands to the left.



Much of north Burma was thick jungle through which trails had to be cut to allow movement. This area represents a relatively clear section.



These Marauders, all suffering from illness, are being evacuated from Myitkyina on 21 May 1944. The Marauders suffered appalling casualties from malaria, acute dysentery, and scrub typhus.

Road from upper Assam in India. It would cut across north Burma to Lashio, south of Myitkyina, to meet the original Burma Road. A ground campaign was necessary to secure the route of the Ledo Road through north Burma. But, LTG Stilwell and the NCAC were short on troops.

General Stilwell's largest contingent was the *Chih Hui Pu*, or Chinese Army in India. It consisted of the 38th and 22nd Chinese Divisions (each 11,000-12,000 men) and the 1,900-man American-Chinese 1st Provisional Tank Group. The 38th and 22nd Divisions had been part of the force sent to Burma by Nationalist Chinese leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to help stem the Japanese invasion. After these two divisions retreated into India, they were reorganized, refitted, and trained to American standards at the Ramgarh Training Center. Although they were part of Stilwell's command, the Chinese officers would do nothing without the Generalissimo's approval and unless he discreetly told them to comply. This situation forced Stilwell to lean heavily upon the American and British troops in his command. This became clearly evident during the north Burma campaign.

For General Stilwell, Myitkyina's capture would provide two immediate benefits. Securing its airfield would eliminate the Japanese fighter threat to the



Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was the leader of Nationalist China. Seeking to improve China's position, he was extremely obstructionist to the Allied effort in Burma.



Major General William J. Donovan founded and led the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Although he never served in the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), he is considered the founding father of that organization.

"Hump" resupply line. The USAAF pilots could fly a shorter and safer route over lower terrain into China. The new lower altitude air route would reduce gasoline consumption and permit heavier cargos. The city of Myitkyina could serve as a major supply depot along the Ledo Road route. But, capturing both the airfield and the city would not be easy.

The elite Japanese 18th Division was in north Burma.

The majority of the troops available to LTG Stilwell's Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) were troops of the Chinese Army in India.



The 18th had sacked Shanghai and Nanking, China, in the late 1930s, and helped rout the Allies during the late 1941-1942 invasions of Malaya and Singapore. They captured the largest number of British Empire prisoners of war ever taken—some 130,000—at Singapore. At 6,300 men, the 18th Division was severely under strength by January 1944. Only some 3,000 of those remained by late June 1944. The veteran 56th Division was also based in north Burma, as were elements of the 15th, 53rd, and 33rd Divisions, and the 24th Independent Mixed Brigade. In all, the Japanese had more than 50,000 troops in the north Burma area.⁶ Luckily, Stilwell had a wildcard; OSS Detachment 101, which had arrived in theater in July 1942.

Detachment 101 was the first overseas unit created under the nascent Special Operations (SO) branch of the Coordinator of Information (COI), the predecessor to the OSS. OSS Chief MG William J. Donovan envisioned units that could “effect physical subversion of the enemy,” in three distinct phases: infiltration and preparation; sabotage and subversion; and direct support to guerrilla, resistance, or commando units.⁷ After conducting several largely unsuccessful long-range sabotage operations, Detachment 101 filled a critical need by focusing its efforts on intelligence collection. Its agents reported on enemy order of battle, the political situation in Burma, and the weather. The former was critical to the 10th USAAF.

Phase One:

In December 1942, Detachment 101 infiltrated the group code-named FORWARD, behind Japanese lines in north Burma from Fort Hertz, the only Allied outpost in the area. This began the unit’s first phase of the Myitkyina campaign. A second group, KNOTHEAD, commanded by CPT Vincent Curl, moved into the upper



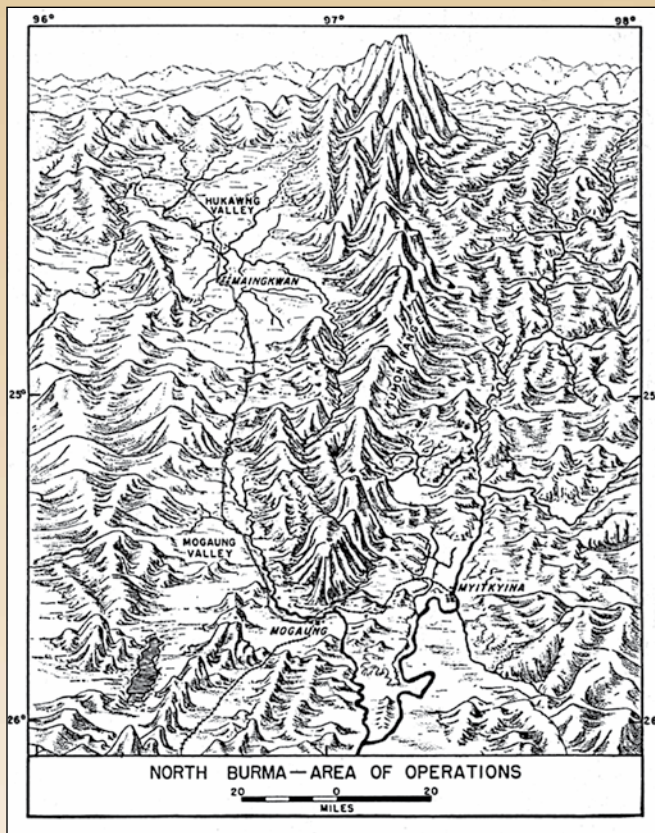
CPT Vincent Curl, behind Japanese lines in Burma, late 1943-early 1944. Curl was the commanding officer of Detachment 101’s KNOTHEAD group.

Hukawng Valley in August 1943. Other OSS groups followed to expand the net of intelligence collection. PAT (led by Pat Quinn) placed an agent on a hill ten miles from the Myitkyina airfield to report Japanese air activities.⁸ These groups became familiar with the region, but also recruited indigenous agents.

During Phase One, Detachment 101 blanketed the area north and west of Myitkyina with agents that reported a constant intelligence stream to NCAC and the 10th USSAF. By January 1944, FORWARD was observing road traffic, and had agents in Myitkyina and further south. They reported the status and locations of Japanese forces, and identified important bombing targets hidden under the jungle canopy. Major General Howard Davidson, commanding general (CG) of the 10th USAAF, wrote; “OSS furnished the principal intelligence

Pat Quinn, a British Special Operations Executive (SOE) operative on loan to the OSS, waves to the camera as he prepares to lead a Detachment 101 patrol from the RED group, Burma, 1944. His radio operator is in front.





Terrain in north Burma was some of the most difficult encountered during WWII. Most ground movement had to be conducted on foot. (U.S. Army map, courtesy Center of Military History)

regarding Japanese troop concentrations, hostile natives, stores and enemy movement. Up to 15 March 1944, some 80% of all combat missions were planned on the basis of intelligence received from this source.⁹ The bombing raids were particularly stinging to the Japanese; only ground observation could have found the targets. One example was a bridge constructed across a river near Myitkyina that was hidden just below the water's surface.¹⁰ This was the advantage of recruiting Kachins.

The Kachins were fierce warriors, and experts in guerrilla hit-and-run tactics and junglecraft. They were natural hunters. Best of all, they were pro-Allied and liked Americans.¹¹ Technician Fifth Grade (T/5) Tom Moon of KNOTHEAD said, "Every time they got a chance to knock off a [Japanese] patrol they did it because it was a psychological play."¹² The Kachins exploited expedient measures. "The Kachins can do terrible things with sharpened bamboos. They fill the bushes on both sides with needle-sharp stakes ... When a [Japanese] patrol was fired upon, and dived for the timber—well, I hardly like to talk about it. After a few ambushes like that, the [Japanese] never took cover when we fired on them."¹³ A captured enemy soldier said that Japanese patrols did "not mind working in American or Chinese-occupied territory but never volunteered for assignments against the Kachins as casualties were always about 50 percent."¹⁴ A 1943 OSS report compared "a Kachin with a dah" [traditional knife/sword] to a "whole panzer division in his own country."¹⁵ It was only natural for the OSS to enlist these indigenous warriors.

KNOTHEAD was first to create a guerrilla force. CPT Curl incorporated the *Myihprap Hpuing* [Lightning Force] into his group to serve as its offensive element.

The Kachins were the most willing and effective ethnic group that Detachment 101 employed in Burma. They were armed with a mixture of British and American weapons, as well as their own "dahs," a short sword that doubled as a machete.



The Lightning Force was an already existing resistance group of several hundred men formed by Kachin leader Zing Tawng Naw.¹⁶ The Kachins also helped with the recovery of downed Allied aircrews. Curl reported in February 1944: "We have this whole area pretty well organized and if [the pilots] will tell [the Kachins] that they are Americans there is only one chance in a thousand against their being brought to ... [here or] one of our other units."¹⁷ Having a network emplaced behind Japanese lines would prove critical as the Allied forces began to go on the offensive.

Detachment 101 commander LTC William R. Peers conferred with his field units and sent liaison and Kachin teams to the British and American units when he learned of the upcoming north Burma offensive. These liaison officers were critical because they alerted Allied units of the friendly forces already behind enemy lines, facilitated coordination, and disseminated intelligence. LTC Peers assigned U.S. Navy Chief Warrant Officer Robert Rhea and U.S. Army LT Martin J. Waters to Merrill's Marauders, LT Charles C. Stelle to the Chindits, and CPT Peter S. Joost to the 1st Air Commando. CPT Chester R. Chartrand was assigned to NCAC to brief the headquarters staff daily and to disseminate Stilwell's intelligence requests to the OSS liaison elements.²⁰ In January 1944, Joost commented, "abysmal ignorance existed regarding Intelligence and Plans between the Americans and British." Though the Chindits were not part of Stilwell's command at the time, MG Orde C. Wingate's British liaison officer at NCAC was never "up-to-date on the [Chindit's] plans and position."²¹ After joining Wingate's headquarters in the field, Stelle became the *de facto* link with NCAC. At this point Detachment 101 entered Phase Two of the campaign, in direct support of the Chindits and the Marauders.

Phase Two:

The 1st Air Commando infiltrated the first of 9,250 Chindits into BROADWAY, a landing zone south of Myitkyina, on the night of 5 March. OSS LT Stelle initially channeled requests to the Air Commando, until the first group of Kachin guides were lost in a CG-4A Waco glider crash.²² Stelle scrambled to get replacements. By 19 March, there were six Detachment 101 Kachins at BROADWAY.²³ During their patrols, the Kachins identified and apprehended local collaborators.²⁴ Using his knowledge of Japanese, Stelle was able to identify enemy units and agents from captured documents. These enemy agents were dealt with swiftly as Stelle reported; "A five minute scanning ... provided a really definitive translation—definitive by reason of the fact that its bearer was shot ten minutes later."²⁵ Stelle's most important contribution was to deliver the Chindit's information to Stilwell. MG Wingate was loath to send information through channels, but he gave Stelle access to Chindit message traffic and encouraged him to forward what messages he saw fit.

Stelle's element was soon renamed the Group #10



Despite working with a willing indigenous population, Detachment 101 still had to conduct effective counter-intelligence. Numerous Kachins and other locals were in Japanese pay—willing or not—such as this spy (right) captured by KNOTHEAD in late 1943.



T/5 Melbourne L. Rackett, USN Warrant Officer Robert R. Rhea, T/5 Thomas N. Moon, and agent "King" somewhere in Burma, early 1944. Rhea, a photographer for the OSS Field Photo branch, was later assigned to the Marauders and later made an "official" unit member.

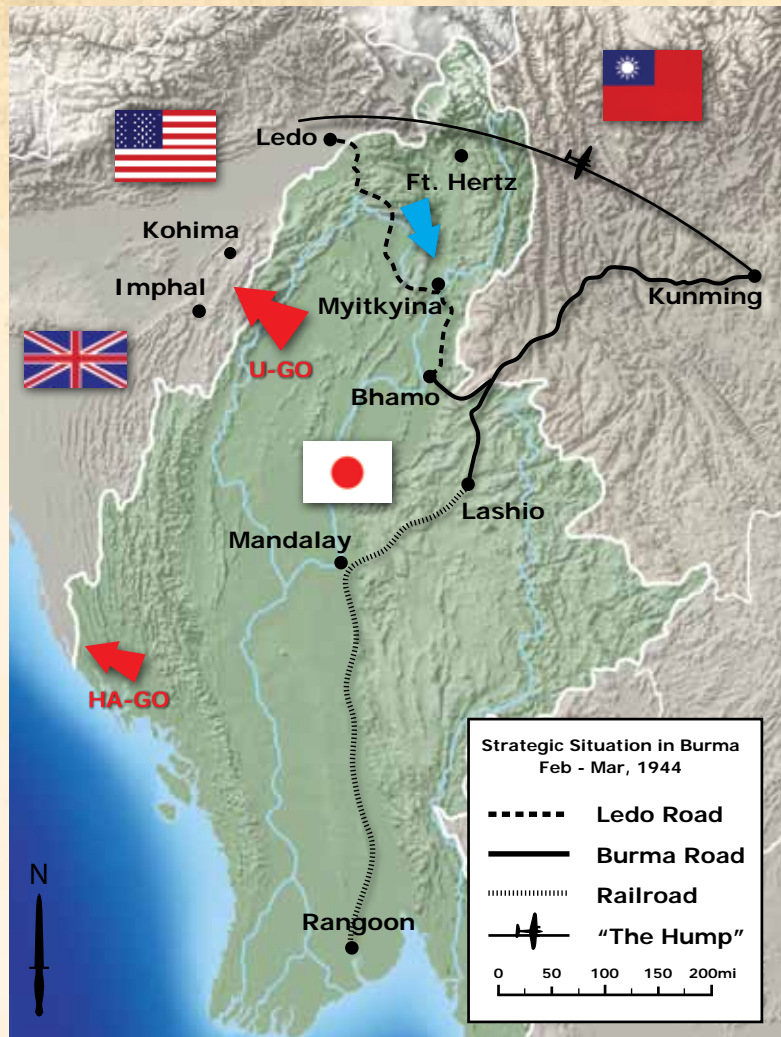
Operation, and reinforced to a total of four radio teams. Although Stelle was soon recalled to join the DIXIE mission, the liaison effort to the Chinese Communists, other Detachment 101 officers remained to recruit locally. They formed the MATES, ADAMS, BARNES, and DAVIS subgroups that reported on Japanese troop movements, engaged in guerrilla warfare, and organized villagers to report on and defend themselves against the Japanese.²⁶ The intelligence they gathered alerted the Chindits of anticipated attacks and enabled them to avoid Japanese formations. Chindit decisions, however, had unintended consequences. Because the group could only carry minimal supplies when they moved north from Mawlu (WHITE CITY) on 7 May 1944, they abandoned uniforms and weapons that the Japanese then recovered. As a result, Detachment 101 elements in the area repeatedly encountered Japanese patrols "dressed in these British uniforms."²⁷

The Fall Campaign...

British and Commonwealth forces constituted the bulk of the Allied forces in the Burma Campaign. The British 14th Army in India was led by Lieutenant General William J. Slim. Composed of thirteen divisions and seven independent brigades, the 14th Army was largely made up of Commonwealth infantry units from India and East Africa and was a much different force than the one that had been thoroughly routed and demoralized by the Japanese in 1942. The 14th Army was itching for a fight.

Nine Japanese infantry divisions and two independent brigades deployed on three fronts controlled Burma. While Stilwell was organizing the north Burma offensive, the Japanese were preparing to launch the three-division 15th Army against India to capture Kohima and Imphal, the major British supply depots in northeast India. The Japanese forces in Operation U-GO were to sever the supply lines to Assam and north Burma, particularly to the Hump airfields. The enemy planned to live off the land and captured supplies. The Japanese Army also hoped that the invasion would prompt Indian nationalists to rise up against the British authorities in India.

In February 1944, the Japanese launched a diversionary attack (Operation HA-GO) south of the main effort. That mission fell to the 28th Army in the Arakan. The British blunted HA-GO during the Battle of the Admin Box. This did not forestall the Japanese advance from the central Burma front. When the Japanese failed to capture the British supply dumps there, however, U-GO turned into a slugfest that continued until July 1944. Besieged British and Commonwealth troops units were resupplied by air, while the Japanese had paid scant attention to their logistics. The plan to live off captured Allied supplies proved disastrous. Between March and July, the British forces under Lieutenant Generals Slim and Geoffrey A. P. Scoones halted and then decisively defeated the Japanese simultaneously at the battles of Kohima and Imphal. Lieutenant General Kotoku Sato, Commander of the 31st Division, radioed to the 15th Japanese Army commander, "our swords are broken and our arrows gone." Japanese units began to retreat contrary to orders, leaving their wounded behind. They were starving and their uniforms were in tatters. The Japanese Army's offensive capability in Burma had been broken, and with more than 55,000 casualties, it was the Imperial Japanese Army's greatest defeat to date. This was the strategic situation when the NCAC north Burma offensive began.



Field Marshall William Slim lead the British 14th Army during the Burma Campaign. The 14th, called "the Forgotten Army," was composed of multi-national Commonwealth units.

The American 5307th also required more support than they realized when they entered north Burma on 24 February 1944. Their mission was to encircle the Japanese 18th Division because the Chinese divisions who had been fighting in the Hukawng Valley since October 1943 had already proved unable—or unwilling—to do so. The 5307th planned to infiltrate, and while Chinese forces kept the main force occupied, attack the Japanese from the rear. To assist the Marauder infiltration, Detachment 101 started guerrilla operations.

On 5 March, LTC Peers ordered LT James L. Tilly, who was advising Zing Tawng Naw's Lightning Force, to harass the Japanese "in every way possible."²⁸ The first effort, establishing a roadblock, only heightened Japanese awareness of the increasing guerrilla threat. On 10 March, Japanese troops retaliated by ambushing the main body of the Lightning Force, but their marksmanship was so poor that they hit no one. The Kachins charged into the Japanese trenches. "One [Japanese soldier] thrust his bayonet into the leading Kachin ... [who] then smashed his Tommy gun over the [Japanese soldier's] head, and the man beside him calmly blew off the [Japanese soldier's] head with a shotgun ... another [Japanese soldier] charged, he was brought down with the other barrel of the shotgun."²⁹ Then, the Lightning Force withdrew and reorganized. The next day they enveloped the Japanese force. The Kachins crept to within twenty-five feet, so surprising the Japanese that they abandoned their weapons and equipment. The Japanese soldiers took out their frustration on civilians; "One old Kachin was captured



CPT Sherman "Pete" Joost was the Detachment 101 liaison officer assigned to the 1st Air Commando. He later served the Chindits, and then took command of the FORWARD group.



CPT Chester Chartrand, the Detachment 101 intelligence officer assigned to NCAC. He is posing inside a captured Japanese bunker.

When he learned of the upcoming north Burma offensive, Detachment 101 commander LTC William R. Peers flew behind the lines to brief his field units. Pictured here from the left is CPT Vincent Curl, the head of the KNOTHEAD group, pilot LT Caheen, Peers, and Father James Stuart. The camouflaged airstrip had movable buildings that could be emplaced after a plane had landed.





LT James L. Tilly (2nd on right) was the OSS advisor to Kachin leader Zing Tawng Naw's Myihprap Hpuing, or "Lightning Force."



BG Franklin D. Merrill passes out gift to Kachin villagers in mid-March 1944 as Father James Stuart (in hat) looks on.



CPT Vince Curl, with beard, briefs the Marauder's commanding officer, BG Franklin D. Merrill (with pipe) on 15 March at Naubum. Father James Stuart, in the bush hat, is on the right.

... tortured ... to reveal our location ... he did not talk ... and was put to death with the bayonet."³⁰ On 16 March, about 200 soldiers approached a Lightning Force patrol

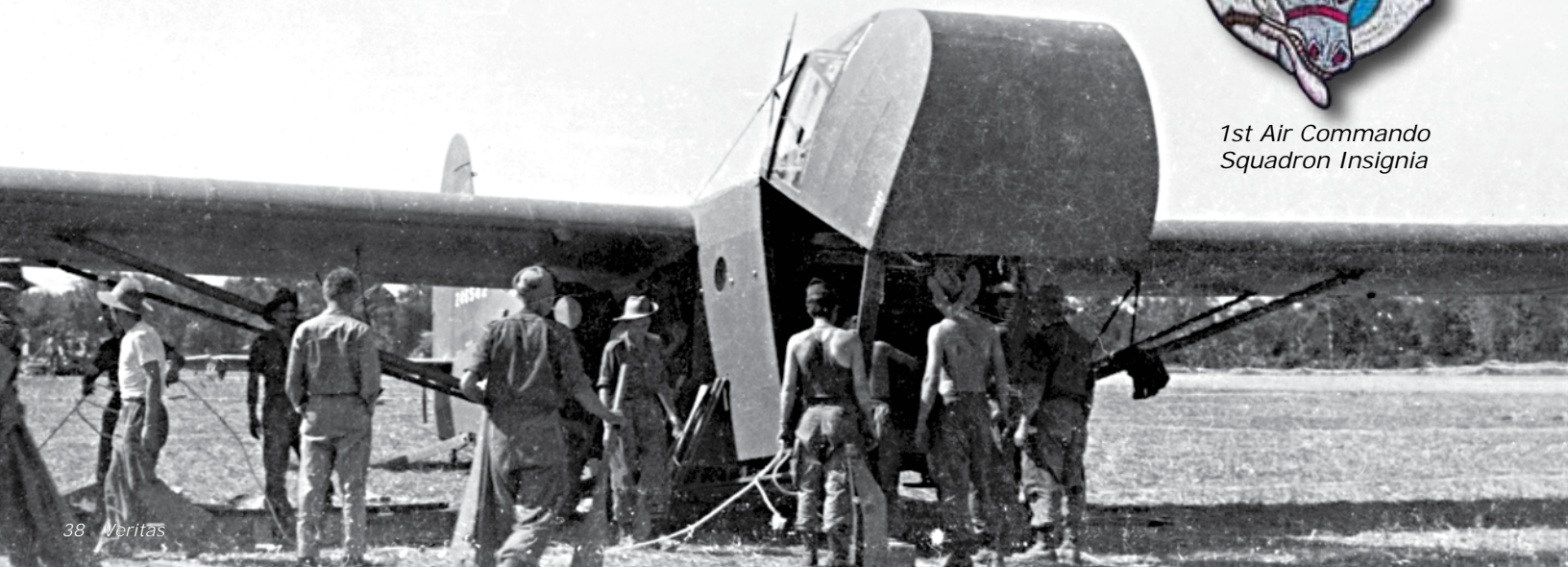
lying in ambush near the banks of the Hkawnglaw Hka. Thinking them to be Chinese from a nearby element, the Kachins verbally challenged, them with, "O.K.," the first half of the sign/countersign for friendly forces in the area. The Japanese soldiers raised their weapons, which was "definitely the wrong password," and a three-day fight ensued that fixed the enemy.³¹ This enabled the Marauders, who were also engaged with this force but who did not yet know the OSS were in the area, to disengage and slip around the contested area. Trailing Chinese forces relieved the Lightning Force and dealt with the remaining Japanese. By then, the Marauders were deep into the OSS operating area.

The first OSSer that many Marauders met was Father James Stuart, an Irish Catholic priest with KNOTHEAD who had spent years among the Kachin. COL Charles N. Hunter described his encounter on 15 March near Naubum with the priest, "We first saw ... a strangely uniformed individual leaning against a tree. Without insignia to indicate his nationality or status,



1st Air Commando Squadron Insignia

The Air Commandos employed CG-4A "WACO" gliders, such as this one being used by Detachment 101, to infiltrate the Chindits into BROADWAY.





The Catholic priest, Father James Stuart, shown here in late 1944/early 1945, had lived in the Kachin hills for years. He was fluent in Jinghpaw, the Kachin language.



Lt. Freeling H. Clower was rescued from Japanese-occupied Burma by the OSS after crash landing in the jungle near Myitkyina in early 1944.



Kachin leader Zing Tawng Naw headed the several-hundred man Myihprap Hpuing, or "Lighting Force." The force was of great assistance as the Marauders moved on Myitkyina.

The Kachins were armed with several kinds of weapons, such as the United Defense "Marlin" UD-42 carried by the guerrilla on the right. Flintlocks and muskets, such as the one being carried by the Kachin on the left, were so popular that the OSS dropped several hundred model 1861 Springfields into the field. The Kachins, who could make their own powder and shot, reveled in the smoke, noise, and general confusion caused by the weapon.

he was sporting an Australian wide-brimmed felt hat."³² As the lead Marauders made their way into KNOTHEAD's camp, Father Stuart conducted Mass while CPT Curl briefed General Merrill on the local situation. Since the Marauders did not have a Catholic priest with them, Father Stuart heard confessions, "I spent all that evening and most of the night hearing the confessions of the men of Col. [George A.] McGee's 'B' Battalion. One man came to be baptized ... I baptized him on the banks of the Tanai Hka at midnight."³³ The airstrip at KNOTHEAD was used to fly out sixty-eight enlisted Marauder casualties. The most valuable form of support that the OSS provided the Marauders was Kachin guides and fighters.

CPT Curl split his guerrilla force to accomplish two functions. One section continued harassing the Japanese. Even though the Marauders already had their own guides, the OSS recognized they "were strangers to this part of the country."³⁴ As a result, CPT Curl dedicated 160 Kachin guides from the Lightning Force to support the Marauders. They knew the easiest and most direct paths through the operating area, and identified which villages were friendly, river crossing sites, and sources of potable water. A KNOTHEAD report said, "A group [of Marauders] would be advancing down the

Detachment 101 had its own light air force, dubbed the "Red Ass Squadron." Here, an L-1 Stinson "Vigilant" has landed at an improvised airstrip in Burma, 1944.



trail, when the Kachin out front would spot and point (rather like a bird-dog), since he could not talk to them. They invariably found a [Japanese] position ... which they never would have seen otherwise."³⁵ Unlike the Americans, the Kachins could tell friend from foe as "To the inexperienced eye ... there is no difference in a Burman and a Kachin ... a Japanese out of uniform is almost as difficult to recognize."³⁶ Kachin scouts, for instance, informed the Marauder's 1st Battalion that the town of Shaduzup was held in strength by the Japanese. This allowed them to surprise a Japanese force below the town. Not all efforts went as smoothly.

Poor communications created confusion. While the Marauder's 1st Battalion was advancing along a trail near Nprawa on 20 March, their Lightning Force guides "suddenly became talkative." The Marauders thought that the Kachins merely wanted food or cigarettes. What the Kachins were trying to convey was that a Japanese machinegun position was ahead. They assumed that the Marauders understood their warning and had provided the food and cigarettes as a reward. After one Marauder was killed and two wounded, the Americans learned to pay attention when the Kachin guides spoke.³⁷

Despite their help, the Marauders remained wary of Detachment 101's Kachins. LT Tilly commented that the worse part was the "unnecessary nerve strain on the leading American soldiers," blazing their own trails and "sweating out [Japanese] fire at every turn."³⁸ Fortunately, the Marauder's commander, BG Merrill saw the intrinsic value of OSS assets. He conferred daily with Zing Tawng Naw through Father Stuart, who spoke fluent *Jinghpaw*, the local language. The Kachins sped up the Marauder advance by providing so much intelligence on Japanese troop movements that it



LT Jack Pamplin (L) and SGT Fima Haimson behind Japanese lines in Burma, mid-1944. Pamplin was then the commander of KNOTHEAD.

reduced the need to send out advanced reconnaissance patrols. Each of the three Marauder battalions had two dedicated Kachin guides. A pool of ten to fifteen others was kept at the 5307th command post to relieve them. Other Lightning Force patrols operated more than a day's march from the Marauder's main body. They improved or cut new trails to ease the passage of pack animals. To expand their support to the Marauders, LTC Peers further directed that KNOTHEAD push further ahead of the Allied advance and to recruit more Kachins.³⁹

Detachment 101's reputation was growing. LT Jack C. Pamplin, the second commander of KNOTHEAD, visited BG Merrill at Nhpum Ga at the end of March. He told Peers that the general was "quick to realize the actual and potential value of our Kachins," and lavished praise on Father Stuart and Zing Tawng Naw. Now, the Marauders had the "greatest respect" for the Kachins and said "I'm damn glad they're on our side."⁴⁰ The

Kachin guides were of immeasurable assistance to Merrill's Marauders. As was common with male Kachins, these guides carry a sword, called a "dah" on their front. It served as both a tool and a weapon.





An artist rendition of a Lightning Force Kachin guide pointing out Japanese troops ahead on the trail to the Marauders.



Allied units in the north Burma offensive relied upon aerial resupply, such as this drop in early 1944. The bulky packages have been wrapped in burlap to help protect them from the shock of landing. Aerial resupply prevented the Marauder's 2nd Battalion from being overrun at Nhpum Ga.

Marauders had come to realize that the Kachins have "been just as important a factor in their own preservation as it has been in their success against the [Japanese] forces."⁴¹ Detachment 101's Kachins alone had killed 160 Japanese during March 1944. It was the scouts, however, that averted disaster when the Marauder's 2nd Battalion got behind the Japanese 18th Division.

The Japanese counter-attacked the strung-out battalion in force at Inkangahtawng. Detachment 101 scouts twice reported that another enemy force was close and marching up from the south to flank the 2nd Battalion. Unfortunately, the Marauders thought that the "enemy" force was actually the Chinese. Warrant Officer Robert Rhea who "was the only American present who knew our Kachins didn't exaggerate," accompanied an OSS patrol to investigate for himself. He knew that when the Kachins said "there was trouble ahead, well there was trouble ahead," and there was. The already embattled Marauders fell back looking for a more defensible position.⁴²

After pausing at the village of Auché, they retreated single-file along a steep, narrow four and a half-mile trail where the Japanese had zeroed in artillery fire. The 2nd Battalion stopped and barricaded itself at the hill town of Nhpum Ga while the 3rd Battalion was positioned at Hsamshingyang to protect a nearby improvised airstrip and to guard against possible attacks down the trail from the north. Father Stuart reported that some shaken Marauders were consoled by having "someone to speak to who had the time to listen to them and who didn't try to explain to them with a trembling voice and a shaking knees that there was nothing to fear. I was as afraid as they were but I kept my mouth shut. Weeks later ... some of these men ... came and thanked me for giving them confidence."⁴³ Then, a message arrived from fifteen Detachment 101 Kachins dug in a mile below the village.

The Americans had withdrawn through them and they wanted to know what to do. Merrill was unhappy that the Kachins had held their ground while his had retreated. He sent a platoon of Marauders to relieve them. Father Stuart reported, "Up till then (Merrill) had always been rather friendly with us. After that he was merely polite."⁴⁴ Shortly afterwards, the 2nd Battalion was on the defensive.

The siege of the 2nd Battalion at Nhpum Ga lasted for two weeks. The Japanese cut the trail leading to the 3rd Battalion at Hsamshingyang and only airdropped supplies kept the 2nd Battalion from running out of ammo, water, and food. While the 3rd Battalion attempted to reopen the trail, the 1st Battalion was enroute to help break the siege. Until these forces arrived, the 2nd Battalion was defending against Japanese frantically attacking the Nhpum Ga perimeter. These attacks were especially deadly to the 2nd Battalion's pack animals. Enemy artillery killed many, which after lying in the heat for several days, contributed to the "insufferable" stench.⁴⁵ Constant attacks and shelling caused many casualties, which could not be evacuated. And, the Japanese seized the only water supply. The situation grew desperate. It was during the siege that the Lightning Force transitioned into a force-multiplying guerrilla force.

While the Marauders were surrounded, the Lightning Force conducted harassing attacks on the Japanese and cut their supply lines. Nearby Detachment 101 agents reported the movements of Japanese troops in the area. On 3 April, the OSS provided a much-needed morale boost when fifty-five Kachins arrived to strengthen the 3rd Battalion's efforts.⁴⁶ Father Stuart relates that upon hearing the news that the Kachins had arrived, COL Hunter told him that this was the "turning point," of the siege.⁴⁷ As the Marauder unit history describes, "The Kachins were probably of more assistance than

Shingbuiyang

Shoraw Ga

Kantau

TARO

Taro
PLAIN

WANTU
BUM
Maingkwai

Walawbun

JAMBU BUM

Shawuzup

Nhpum Ga

Inkangahtaw

Kamaing

Chindits
(BROADWAY)
50 miles

Knothead A0

Red A0

Mogaung

IOI

SUPPORTS THE
MARAUDERS




Tramp A0

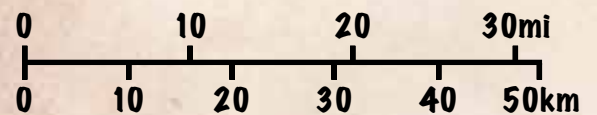
FROM THE HUKAWNG VALLEY TO MYITKYINA

24 FEBRUARY - 27 MAY 1944

MARAUDER MISSIONS

	1ST MISSION	24 FEB - 7 MAR
	2ND MISSION	11 MAR - 10 APR
	3RD MISSION	27 APR - 27 MAY
	CHINESE ADVANCE	24 FEB - 27 MAY

	PRINCIPAL ROADS
	TRAILS
	LEDO ROAD CONSTRUCTION
	RAILROAD



ELEVATION IN FEET



1 16 March: Lt. James Tilly and the Kachin Lightning Force engage the Japanese from the rear, allowing the Marauder 1st Battalion to disengage.

2 15 March: The Marauder 2nd and 3rd Battalions arrive at KNOTHEAD's headquarters at Naubum.

3 24-26 March: Detachment 101 scouts report Japanese positions west and south of the Marauder's 2nd Battalion, causing them to withdraw.

4 28 March-9 April: The Lightning Force helps break the siege of the 2nd Battalion at Nhpum Ga.

5 10-15 May: FORWARD attacks villages east of Myitkyina to tie up Japanese troops.

6 15-16 May: Lts William Martin and William Hazelwood lead the Marauders' infiltration to Myitkyina.

7 17 May: The Marauders take the Myitkyina Airfield.

Forward A0



COL Charles N. Hunter (L) led the Marauders at Nhpum Ga when BG Merrill was evacuated after a heart attack on 31 March. Hunter was later the commanding officer of "H" Force that captured the Myitkyina Airfield on 17 May 1944.



Kachin guerrillas could be as young as this twelve-year-old using a Thompson M1A1 submachinegun next to a Marauder in mid-1944.



USN LCDR James C. Luce takes a break from his medical and guerrilla commander duties. He later created and ran Detachment 101's hospital in its headquarters at Nazira, India.

anyone realized, by creating in the minds of the Japanese an exaggerated idea of the size of the area held by the Marauders and of their strength."⁴⁸ By 9 April, the combined assaults of the Marauder's 1st and 3rd battalions, in addition to the hundreds of Japanese soldiers killed attacking the 2nd Battalion, broke the siege of Nhpum Ga. The Japanese retreated back into the jungle. Acting commander COL Charles N. Hunter, (BG Merrill had been evacuated on 31 March from Hsamshingyang after suffering a heart attack) was full of praise for Detachment 101's Kachins. He credited them with "saving over two-thirds of Merrill's forces."⁴⁹

The siege at Nhpum Ga had caused a serious delay. Even more distressing, the casualties suffered meant that the Marauders had to rapidly reorganize to sustain combat. What remained of the 2nd Battalion was designated as the "M" Force (M taken from its commander LTC McGee), and was supplemented by 200 Kachins from KNOTHEAD. The other Marauder battalions each had a Chinese regiment attached, and were redesignated as "forces." The 1st Battalion was "H" Force (under COL Hunter) and the 3rd became "K" Force (under COL Henry L. Kinnison). Now, the Marauders could continue their advance.

In early April, the Marauders had left KNOTHEAD's area of operations and moved closer to that of FORWARD, commanded by LCDR James Luce. He was a surgeon by training and a survivor of the USS *Maryland*, a battleship sunk at Pearl Harbor. Luce was in charge of eight guerrilla companies; about 1100 men. Like all the Detachment 101 guerrillas, they carried a large number of automatic weapons that provided great firepower. As the Kachins of KNOTHEAD had done, FORWARD's forces screened the Marauder's flanks, mined roads, and ambushed Japanese elements patrolling the area.⁵⁰ With the advance, elements of some Detachment 101 groups, such as PAT, had to struggle to remain well behind enemy lines. Their response was to move deeper into the Japanese rear areas.

This was a logical strategy, and, as another Detachment 101 group found out in 1945, it was actually safer. "The closer you got to your own lines, the denser the concentration of regular enemy troops ... What you met deep in enemy territory were police ... trained to fight one on one ... Two platoons of ... regular soldiers could have defeated my whole battalion ... But one of our platoons of forty men could have defeated a force of over one hundred policemen. And our battalion could have taken on a police force of close to a thousand for at least several hours."⁵¹ The focus on guerrilla warfare had drawbacks for Detachment 101's ongoing role of intelligence reporting. By April 1944, LTC Peers explained to OSS chief BG William J. Donovan that intelligence collection became secondary to the "sharp increase in the actual combat functions of our patrols."⁵² This was especially so as the Allied forces closed on Myitkyina.

To prevent the Marauders' advance from the west from being discovered, FORWARD began clearing



LT William J. Martin led the Detachment 101 group that helped the Marauders surprise the Japanese at the Myitkyina airfield on 17 May 1944.

villages on the far side of Myitkyina. On 10 May, they lost three Kachins killed in a diversionary attack that tied down an estimated three Japanese battalions. FORWARD's Kachins then assaulted Sadon to the east of Myitkyina on 15 May. They lost three killed and twelve wounded, but killed half of the sixty-five defenders before withdrawing.⁵³ By then, time was of the essence and the Marauders needed help for the final push to Myitkyina. The numerous engagements with the enemy—particularly at Nphum Ga—had placed them behind schedule. They had to get to Myitkyina before the monsoons arrived.

The Marauders desperately needed help to get to Myitkyina quickly, and unseen. Fortunately, Kachins under the PAT group knew the area well. Particularly active in Detachment 101's role at this critical moment was LTs William J. Martin and William F. Hazelwood group. Under their command was the only Kachin guide who knew the local back trails that the force could follow to the airfield, yet still remain unseen by villagers or the Japanese. As fourteen year-old N'Naw Yang Nau was leading the combined Marauder/Chinese "H" Force on the night of 16 May, disaster struck when he was bitten by a poisonous snake [possibly a cobra or krait]. LT Martin pulled out his poncho to cover himself and the injured Kachin, and used his flashlight to examine the wound. "Sure enough there were two fang marks right behind his toes." Martin applied a tourniquet and sent word back through the Marauder column for medics to come up. While they waited, the scout had his

own ideas of how to treat the wound. His solution was "dig a hole, pour silver rupees in it, put his foot in there, and bury it ... And he would sit there till he either lived or died. So we proceeded to calm him down, dig the damn hole, put a bag of rupees in there ... put his foot on top, and start to fill the hole back up." Meanwhile, COL Hunter and the medics arrived.

The medics brushed away the dirt and tried to suck out the poison. By then, N'Naw Yang Nau was "woozy" and unable to walk. But, the Marauders were running out of time. They still had to get to Myitkyina unseen, and ahead of the impending monsoon rains. COL Hunter had the scout strapped on his horse and N'Naw Yan Nau managed to lead the Marauder column with "bleary eyed directions" to a bivouac at the village of Namkwi, near the airfield.⁵⁴ That mission having been accomplished, LT Martin's group then left their guide to recover, and tried to blow up a Japanese train. They could not reach it in time. Instead, they reported the Japanese working at night on the airstrip to repair damage incurred by day. Meanwhile, the Marauder and Chinese troops rested until daylight.

On the morning of 17 May 1944, the Marauders assaulted, surprising the defenders and quickly captured Myitkyina's main airfield. LT Martin's group helped to clear it of debris, and reported "C-47's were landing on the strip by afternoon."⁵⁵ Individual Marauders praised the Detachment 101 Kachins for the "excellent work that they had done in leading the entire force to the airstrip without contacting [the Japanese] or even letting the [Japanese] know that this large force was in the area."⁵⁶ COL Hunter commended Detachment 101 when he relayed to LTC Peers; "Thanks to your people for a swell job. Could not have succeeded without them."⁵⁷

However, the success was short-lived. LTG Stilwell wanted to give the Chinese the honor of capturing the city, but they bungled their attack. The two columns mistook each other for the Japanese and nearly annihilated one

An artist's rendition of N'Naw Yang Nau leading COL Hunter's "H" Force to Myitkyina on the night of 15-16 May 1944. The Kachin guide had just been bitten by a poisonous snake.





One of LTs Martin and Hazelwood's Kachins at Myitkyina Airfield, 17 May 1944. Like many Detachment 101 guerrillas, he is armed with a Thompson M1A1 submachine gun.



Marauders of "H" Force take shelter on 17 May 1944 in revetments built to shelter Japanese aircraft. The Marauders had just taken the Myitkyina Airfield.

another. This debacle enabled the outnumbered Japanese to pull in reinforcements. Only 300 enemy troops had been in the city on 18 May, but by the end of the month there were more than 2,500.³⁸ The siege of Myitkyina had begun. To the OSS, this necessitated an unplanned third phase of operations.

In its first two phases of the campaign, Detachment 101 was instrumental in helping the Allies infiltrate and secure the area north of Myitkyina. They became a significant force multiplier for NCAC and their prior field experience had been critical. Detachment 101 had months to learn the battlefield, and its groups had used the time well. First, they blanketed the operating area with agents that had sent back a constant stream of intelligence about the enemy. Second, the OSS teams began a UW campaign by recruiting and training guerrillas. Third, Detachment 101's commander, LTC Peers, established liaison with the principal spearheading forces. By using these three elements, Detachment 101 set itself up to support the conventional forces when the Myitkyina offensive began. In so doing, Detachment 101 became the strategic theater asset originally envisioned by BG Donovan when he dispatched the group to Burma

in 1942. The next article will show how Detachment 101 employed UW to facilitate the capture of Myitkyina in August 1944. ♠

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Endnotes

- 1 This often-repeated quote is found in Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers* (New York: William Sloane, 1948), 106.
- 2 [Brief Chronology of OSSSU Detachment 101], F 74, B 42, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
- 3 Anonymous, *Merrill's Marauders* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990), 19.
- 4 Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1987), 286, 240.
- 5 Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period June 1 to June 30, 1943, inclusive," 1 July 1943, F 1, B 65, E 99, RG 226, NARA.
- 6 Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 130; 220; Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War: 1941-45* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), 662.
- 7 Kermit Roosevelt, *War Report of the O.S.S.* (New York: Walker & Company, 1976), 206; 70.
- 8 William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 147-148. (see *Veritas* 3:2006, Troy J. Sacquety, "The Failures of Detachment 101 and its Evolution into a Combined Arms Team").
- 9 William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July to 31 August, 1944," [31 August], F 15, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See Davidson to Donovan, "Contribution of Detachment 101, OSS, to USAAF in Northeastern Assam and North Burma," 1 August 1944; William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 1 February to 29 February, 1944, inclusive," 29 February 1944, F 52, B39, E 190, RG 226, NARA. **The USAAF flew up to 170 sorties/day in the Hukawng Valley. According to Lt. Jenkins, a downed P-40 pilot picked up by Detachment 101, airmen often did not know why they were bombing through tree cover or that they were causing so much damage. They considered these missions a "dull assignment," and preferred ones in which they knew that they were damaging the Japanese. "KNOTHEAD Group-Report April," 1 April 1944, F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.**
- 10 "Theater Officer's Pouch Report," 2 May 1944, F 31, B 75, E 99, RG 226, NARA.
- 11 James C. Luce, "Background, historical, military and political of the Kachin Hills area," 28 January 1944, original in author's possession. **The terms Kachin or Jinghpaw are an amalgamation of several minor tribes, the largest being the Jinghpaw; Although most were loyal, plentiful examples exist of Kachins who spied for the Japanese, meaning that the OSS always had to keep a wary eye on their indigenous recruits.**
- 12 Tom Moon interview by Heidi Vion, April 13 1995, Garden Grove, CA. Copy in author's files.
- 13 Ralph Henderson, "Jump-In to Adventure," *Reader's Digest*, June 1945, 47.
- 14 "KNOTHEAD GROUP," [March-May 1944], F 48, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
- 15 Agent Robey to Wilky [William C. Wilkinson], "Introduction (report on travels)" [early 1943], F 495, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.
- 16 William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April to 30 April, 1944, inclusive," 30 April 1944, F 54, B 110, E 190, RG 226, NARA. **Under a policy set up by previous commander, Colonel Carl F. Eifler, the families of the Lightning Force were under the care of Detachment 101. Much like what occurred later in Vietnam's Central Highlands, families clustered around KNOTHEAD's main camp. This stretched food supplies leading Peers to order the practice stopped because it interfered with operations. The families/refugees were given the option of being led to**

- Allied lines, but the "care and welfare of the Kachin refugees was not in any way to influence the actions or policy of this unit." "KNOTHEAD Group-Report April," 1 April 1944, NARA.
- 17 William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 1 March to 31 March, 1944, inclusive," 31 March 1944, F 53, B 40, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
 - 18 Allen, *Burma: The Longest War*, 661.
 - 19 Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York: Random House, 1991), 412.
 - 20 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA; Peers advised Merrill to transport the Marauders 125 miles to their jumping off point. Merrill insisted that they go on a conditioning march, but this only contributed to their fatigue. See Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 141-142; Rhea had the singular honor of being made an official member of Merrill's Marauders; Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA.
 - 21 Sherman P. Joost to Peers, "On or about January...," 28 May 1944, F 466, B 66, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Another copy can be found in F 2010, B 109, E 154, RG 226, NARA. Joost was the "jack of all trades" in Detachment 101 during the Myitkyina Campaign. As liaison officer to the Air Commando, he went into BROADWAY by glider, was later given command of the DEMOS group and accompanied a Chindit column called the "Dah" force. He later replaced James C. Luce as the Commanding Officer of FORWARD.
 - 22 Stelle was also to provide OSS Intel to Wingate, place OSS equipment and personnel at Wingate's disposal, find possibilities for Morale Operations, Special Operations and Secret Intelligence work, and perform a tactical Research and Analysis (R&A) function. To perform this mission, Stelle had a crash course in the area that Wingate would go into, as well as familiarization with enemy equipment and the operations of Detachment 101. Charles C. Stelle to Hall, "Activities as OSS Liaison Officer with General Wingate's Forces," [June 1944], F 2010, B 109, E 154, RG 226, NARA; For more on the CG4A see Troy J. Sacquety, *The CG-4A Waco Glider*, Veritas 2:2007.
 - 23 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 1 March," 31 March 1944, NARA. Per Charles C. Stelle, "Report on Operations of Unit A Group," [March 1944], F 486, B 67, E 190, RG 226, NARA, the code names of the Kachins were Petru, Pom, Htem, Ching, Haw, and Long.
 - 24 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA. Detachment 101 later occupied BROADWAY in August after it was abandoned by the Chindits, and used it as an operations base and landing strip to infiltrate/exfiltrate personnel.
 - 25 Stelle to Hall, "Activities as OSS Liaison Officer," [June 1944], NARA.
 - 26 [William R. Peers to William J. Donovan] "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, F 12, B 34, E 190, RG 226. Also see Charles C. Stelle to William R. Peers, "Operations of Group at Broadway, Group 10, March-May 1944," [May 1944], F 438, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.
 - 27 "Interview with Conley," 17 May 1945, F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
 - 28 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 1 March," 31 March 1944, NARA; Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA.
 - 29 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA.
 - 30 James Tilly, untitled report, [March 1944], F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.
 - 31 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA. Also see Anonymous, *Merrill's Marauders* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990), 50-52.
 - 32 Charles N. Hunter, "GALAHAD: Intelligence Aspect," *Studies in Intelligence* 5 (Winter 1961) A7.
 - 33 William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering Period 30 September to 31 October, 1944," [1 November 1944], F 17, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See "Report by Father Stewart [sic] on the Help Given 'Merrill's Marauders' by the Kachins."
 - 34 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See "Report by Father Stewart [sic]."
 - 35 "KNOTHEAD GROUP," [March-May, 1944], NARA; Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA.
 - 36 "KNOTHEAD Group-Report April," 1 April 1944, F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.
 - 37 Anonymous, *Merrill's Marauders* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1990), 52-53.
 - 38 James Tilly, "Lt. Tilly's Report," [March 1944], F 486, B 67, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
 - 39 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April to 30 April, 1944, inclusive," 30 April 1944, F 54, B 40, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
 - 40 Jack Pamplin to William R. Peers, 30 March 1944, F 453, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA.
 - 41 "KNOTHEAD Group-Report April," 1 April 1944, F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.
 - 42 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See "Report by Father Stewart [sic]."
 - 43 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See "Report by Father Stewart [sic]."
 - 44 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See "Report by Father Stewart [sic]."
 - 45 *Merrill's Marauders*, 75-76.
 - 46 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See "Report by Father Stewart [sic]."
 - 47 *The Merrill's Marauders War In Burma: Volume 1* (Merrill's Marauders Association, 1995), 25.
 - 48 Anonymous, *Merrill's Marauders*, 75-76.
 - 49 "KNOTHEAD GROUP," [March-May 1944], NARA.
 - 50 "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA; James C. Luce, "Report on Tour of Duty With Office of Strategic Services Detachment 101: North Burma and Assam, November 1, 1943 to April 1, 1945," [April 1945], original in author's possession.
 - 51 Roger Hilsman, *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines* (Crawfordsville, Indiana: Brassey's, 1990), 170-171.
 - 52 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA.
 - 53 Luce, "Report on Tour of Duty," [April 1945]; Joseph Alderdice to Charles Cheston, "Casualties and Illness of Personnel," 31 August 1944, F 209 A, B 26, E 165, RG 226, NARA; Sima Kawng to Major [Sherman P. Joost], 4 September 1944, F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
 - 54 William J. Martin interview by James Luce, 8 August 1988, Oregon, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files.
 - 55 "1st Lieutenant William John Martin," 11 June 1945, F 47, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (United States: Rand McNally, 1979), 304-6.
 - 56 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See "Report by Father Stewart [sic]."
 - 57 "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA.
 - 58 Romanus and Sunderland, *Stiltwell's Command Problems*, 229; 232.



This photograph, found on the Myitkyina Airfield, was brought home by a Marauder. The entire Japanese unit had been wiped out there on 17 May 1944.

EVOLUTION

Evolution of ARSOF Communications

By Kenneth Finlayson



In World War II, frequency modulation (FM) radios like the SCR-300 provided short-range voice communications for the Rangers and conventional ground forces. Long-range transmissions required the use of Morse Code.



With a satellite communications system mounted on an All-Terrain Vehicle, this Special Forces soldier in Afghanistan has the ability to send voice and data transmissions around the globe.

Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) communications grew out of the support to the World War II legacy units that are the predecessors of today's units. The following photo essay traces the history of ARSOF communications support from individual and unit perspectives. From World War II, the Korean War, and Viet Nam to the Global War on Terrorism, the need for technologically advanced communications systems, highly trained operators, and the ability to deploy rapidly have been hallmarks of ARSOF communications support.



Wire communications between a headquarters and its subordinate units were the most secure method of transmission. The communications section of Merrill's Marauders HQ established a switchboard to handle traffic with battalions in Burma during World War II.



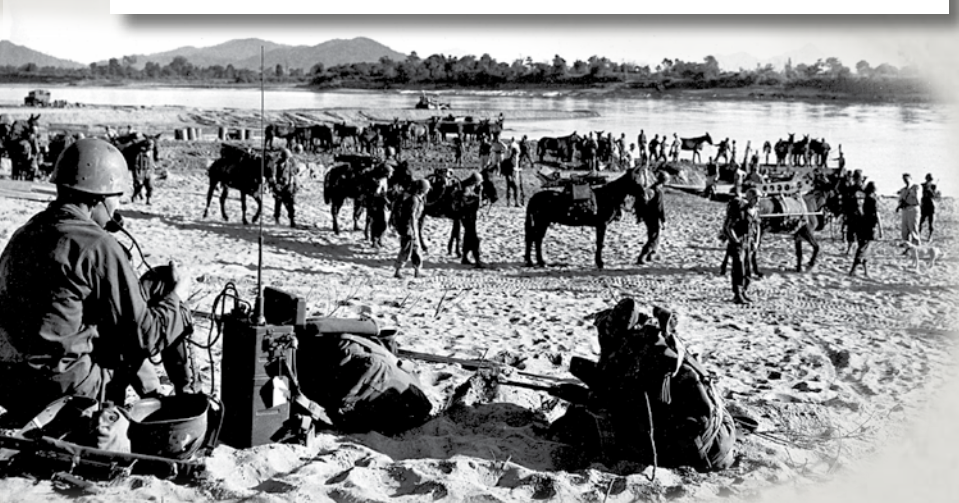
Support to today's Army Special Operations Forces requires a complex communications network for voice and data transmission world-wide. The Operations Center of the 10th Special Forces Group during the opening stages of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM shows the extensive C4I network supporting operations.

World War II: The Legacy Units

Operating behind enemy lines in all theaters of World War II, the predecessors of today's ARSOF units depended on radio communications to maintain contact with their headquarters. In Burma, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Detachment 101 and Merrill's Marauders worked deep behind Japanese lines. In the Pacific Theater, the Alamo Scouts and 6th Army Rangers gathered intelligence and conducted raids on the Japanese-held islands. In Europe, the Operational Groups and Jedburgh Teams of the OSS worked with resistance movements against the German occupation. The 512th Signal Company supported the Canadian-American First Special Service Force in 1944 and in 1945 was incorporated into the newly constituted 112th Signal Battalion supporting the 1st Allied Airborne Army. The 112th participated in Operation VARSITY and provided telephone support at the Potsdam Conference. The 112th was deactivated on 17 December 1945.



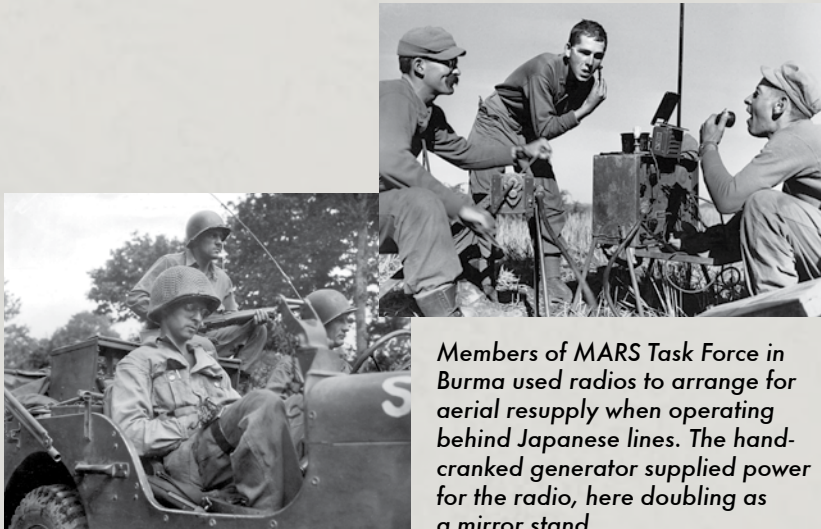
Operating behind the lines in Burma, Detachment 101 reported on the movements of Japanese troops. SGT Fima Haimson establishes communications using a home-made radio constructed of components obtained locally.



The MARS Task Force, the successor to Merrill's Marauders, assembles on the banks of a river in Burma. The communications section has established a radio net to control the operation.



First Lieutenant Milton Beckwith of the Alamo Scouts demonstrates a waterproof radio developed for use during infiltration of the Pacific islands in Luzon, 1945. The Alamo Scouts collected critical intelligence on the Japanese for the 6th Army.



Members of MARS Task Force in Burma used radios to arrange for aerial resupply when operating behind Japanese lines. The hand-cranked generator supplied power for the radio, here doubling as a mirror stand.

T/4 Norman Skeely of the 5th Ranger Battalion prepares a message for transmission back to the battalion headquarters in France, 17 August 1944. The fast moving Rangers used vehicle mounted radios as well as man-pack systems. Strapped to his leg is the Morse Code key.



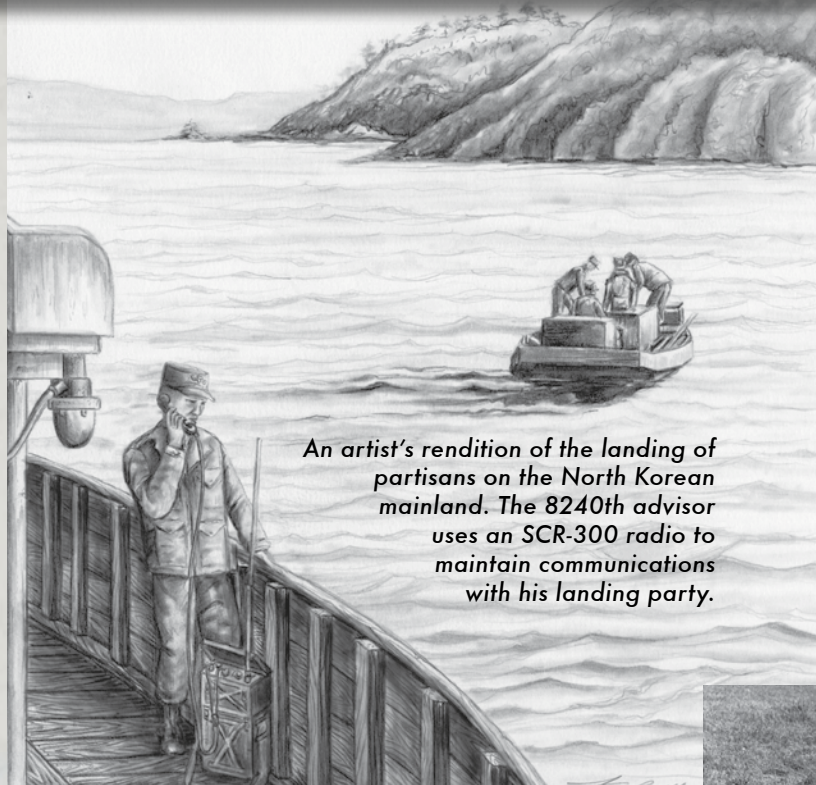
"Cable Dogs" of the 112th Signal Battalion burying communications cable to support the First Airborne Task Force (ATF) in Operation VARSITY, March 1945. The 112th soldiers parachuted across the Rhine to provide communications support. The 112th later established the 1st ATF communications network during the link-up with the Russian Army on the Baltic.

The 1950s: The Korean War and Early Special Forces

The birth of Army Special Forces coincided with the Korean War. Army Special Operations Forces were an integral part of the Army's force structure during the war. The Army organized Ranger companies, four of which were employed in 1950 and 1951. On the off-shore islands, U.S. advisors worked with North Korean partisan units under the control of the 8240th Army Unit. In 1952, the Army stood up the 10th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, NC. Some members of the 10th deployed to Korea to the 8240th. Communications for the ARSOF units was largely based on World War II-era radios, principally the FM SCR-300. The AN/GRC-109 system, with the hand-cranked generator was used by the Special Forces teams, who continued to use Morse Code for long-range communications.



A field communications station at Fort Bragg in the 1960s using a commercial shortwave radio. This is in the Special Forces Gabriel Demonstration area on Smoke Bomb Hill. The Gabriel demonstration was an active display of Special Forces' capabilities.

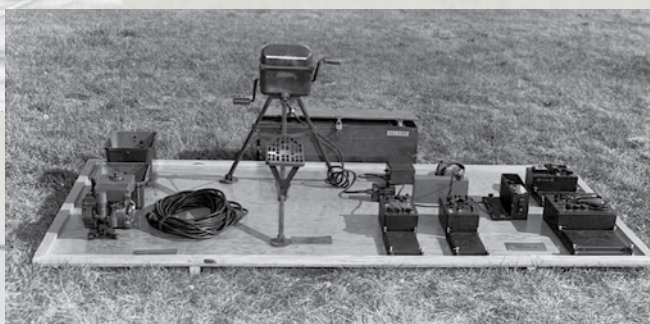


An artist's rendition of the landing of partisans on the North Korean mainland. The 8240th advisor uses an SCR-300 radio to maintain communications with his landing party.



An equipment layout at the 10th Special Forces Group, Bad Toelz, Germany. Amidst the skis and other equipment is the AN/GRC-109 radio system that was the standard issue for the teams.

The venerable AN/GRC-109, the "Angry 9" was a mainstay of SOF communications from the 1950s to the 1980s. The hand-cranked generator provided the power for the radio.



Communications bunker on Cho-do, an island off the western coast of Korea. Multiple antennas allowed the advisors from the 8240th Army Unit (AU) to keep contact with their elements on other islands via UHF and HF radios.



The 1960s and 1970s: The Vietnam War and the Return of the Rangers

The Vietnam War witnessed the rapid expansion of Special Forces, primarily with the formation of the 5th Special Forces Group, which at its peak numbered over 3,000 SF soldiers. The Rangers were present in the form of Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRPs). During the war, the main mode of communications was via man-pack FM radios, with ranges extended by the use of retransmission sites. With the activation of the 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions in 1974, the Army stood up the first battalion-sized Ranger units since World War II. ARSOF continued to depend on communications support at the unit level, as there were no SOF signal units in the force structure.



The ability to send and receive Morse Code, using the R-390 receiver, was a unique feature of Special Forces communications in the 1970s. While the conventional forces depended on voice communications, the ability to transmit Morse Code enabled the Special Forces teams to communicate at great distances.



Special Forces soldiers at Fort Bragg transmitting using the AN/PRC-74 HF radio. The RTO is sending a message in Morse Code.



A U.S. advisor with the South Vietnamese Army Rangers. American advisors used the man-pack PRC-10 FM radios to call for artillery, air support, and to communicate with their higher headquarters early in the war.

U.S. Special Forces advisors on patrol with their Montagnard team cross a rice paddy dike near Ba To in Quang Ngei Province, South Vietnam in 1963. The Radio-Telephone Operator (RTO) carried the PRC-10, and later PRC-25 and PRC-77 radios to keep contact with the firebase. The use of FM retransmission sites extended the range of the radios.



1980s and 1990s: Dedicated Signal Support and Global Operations

Inactive since December 1945, the 112th Signal Battalion (A) was reactivated on 17 September 1986 at Fort Bragg, NC. The mission of the 112th was to provide tailored communications support packages to Joint and ARSOF component commands. The 112th was initially assigned to 1st Special Operations Command (1st SOCOM) and in the 1990s, was assigned to the newly formed United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). The decades of the '80s and '90s saw ARSOF units involved in every major U.S. engagement, including Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada, Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama and Operation DESERT STORM in Iraq. Advances in communications technology introduced satellite systems as a major component of communications support.



Soldiers of the 112th Signal Battalion erect a Down-sized Deployable Satellite Terminal (DDST). The 112th's capability to transmit and receive voice and data globally via satellite communications systems extends the reach of ARSOF units around the world.

The increasingly complex multi-channel communications systems fielded by the 112th Signal Battalion support ARSOF units around the world. Since its activation in 1986, the 112th has maintained a continuous overseas presence from its base at Fort Bragg, NC.



Members of the 10th Special Forces Group establish communications during winter training in Colorado. Powerful lightweight, Multiband Intra-Team Radios (MBITR) were developed in the 1990s to support ARSOF missions.



As part of UNITAF in 1992, the 5th Special Forces Group conducted evaluations of Soviet-constructed airfields in Somalia.



The 21st Century: Support to the Global War on Terrorism

The Global War on Terrorism placed ARSOF in the forefront in both Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in Iraq. On the ground, Special Forces teams working with host nations forces depended on lightweight systems such as the Multiband Inter-Team Radio (MBITR) for secure communications. The 112th Signal Battalion deployed communications teams around the world and by interfacing with the Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE), provided secure voice and data transmission capability to ARSOF units in every theater of operations.



The Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE) based at MacDill AFB, Florida, provides higher-level communications support to the Joint Special Operations Task Forces. Air Force General Victor E. Renuart, Commander of Northern Command, gets a demonstration of JCSE capability during an exercise in April 2007.



In the high mountain terrain of Afghanistan, satellite communications was critical for the far-flung Special Forces teams in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in 2001. A member of the 5th Special Forces group has set-up a AN-PRC 104 capable of transmitting voice and data around the globe.



In Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the 112th Signal Battalion elements deployed to the Philippines to support the Joint Special Operations Task Force on the island of Basilan. The 112th provided the communications interface between the Task Force headquarters and the Pacific Command in Hawaii using the TSC-93V (2).

Calling Close Air Support in northern Iraq during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Members of the 10th Special Forces Group supported the Kurds in OIF. ARSOF units often have Air Force Tactical Air Combat Controllers attached, who guide the aircraft carrying aerial delivered munitions using the AN-PRC 117 Multiband Tactical Radio.



The Knollwood Maneuver: The Ultimate Airborne Test

By Eugene G. Piasecki

The night of 6 December 1943 in southeastern North Carolina was cold with a nearly-full moon. Towns in Moore, Hoke, Scotland and Richmond counties were blacked out by Army request. Road networks from Cameron to Rockingham, Eastwood to Laurinburg, West End to Raeford and Hamlet to Hoffman had been closed to all civilian traffic from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. Approaching from the east, a large armada of C-47 aircraft carrying paratroopers or towing gliders was nearing the Knollwood Army Auxiliary Airfield near Pinehurst, NC. Aboard one glider was Major (MAJ) Robert L. Johnson, six enlisted glider artillerymen and a jeep from the 675th Glider Field Artillery (GFA) Battalion of the 11th Airborne Division. They were part of the airborne invasion force launched to capture Knollwood Airfield. In the early morning hours of 7 December 1943, MAJ Johnson's glider pilot released the tow line and began the descent toward his landing zone along N.C. Route 5 between Aberdeen and Pinehurst, NC.¹

After hitting the landing zone, the glider skimmed across a field hitting a farmhouse that sheared off its left wing. It stopped and settled "tail-up". No one was injured in the farmhouse or the glider. MAJ Johnson and the soldiers scrambled out to get the tail down, lifted up the nose compartment and freed the jeep. This accomplished, Johnson drove off to locate the battalion's twelve 75mm pack howitzers and crews. This glider landing during the Knollwood Maneuver was typical for the "Blue" Force elements. It marked the beginning of the exercise that determined whether the American airborne kept divisional sized elements.²

The purpose of this article is to discuss the development and formation of the American Army airborne units, the Airborne Training Center at Camp Mackall, NC, and the Knollwood Maneuver conducted in December 1943 which preserved the airborne divisions in World War II.



Parachute forces for the U.S. Army were proposed as early as 1918. Despite the German Army's airborne demonstrations in the 1930's, the American Army did not form its first parachute "Test Platoon" until 1940. This marked the beginning of a series of experiments with the size and composition of airborne forces that continued throughout World War II. The one topic that generated the greatest controversy among senior officers was the value of forming airborne divisions.

An early American airborne visionary was Brigadier General William L. "Billy" Mitchell. In 1918, he planned and received approval from General John J. Pershing to drop elements of the 1st Infantry Division by parachute from airplanes into the German Army's rear area during the latter stages of WWI.³ The Great War ended before Mitchell could implement the plan. After the war all military force modernization efforts competed for a very limited War Department budget. The airborne concept did not get past the planning stages. Recovery from the Great Depression dominated the 1930s even as the Germans refined their *Blitzkrieg* strategy by integrating parachute and glider units into their offensive operations.

Germany air-landed soldiers at Aspern Airport in Vienna to begin the occupation in early 1938. After the Munich Peace Conference in September 1938 a German infantry regiment was air-landed to occupy the Silesian town of Freiwaldau. Realizing the significance of airborne forces in future operations, the U. S. Chief of Infantry got approval from the War Department Operations Section (G-3) to study the organization of a regiment of air infantry. Once the study became public, the chiefs of the Infantry, Army Air Force, and Engineer branches petitioned the War Department for the proponency of air infantry tactics. The Chief of Engineers envisioned employing paratroopers as saboteurs and demolition teams. The Army Air Force felt that these airborne soldiers should be "Marines of the Air Corps" and designated "Air Grenadiers."⁴ The Infantry saw the airplane as merely transportation; the paratroop's primary mission on the ground was to fight as infantrymen. On 6 August 1939, General George C. Marshall assigned the mission to raise, train, test and equip airborne forces to Major General (MG) George A. Lynch, the Chief of Infantry.⁵ Once again, the Germans provided the impetus for American action.

German parachute troops (*Fallschirmjaegers*) were used to capture key bridges over Belgium's Maas and Waal Rivers while parachute and glider forces neutralized and captured Fort Eben Emael, their key defensive position. This enabled the Germans to occupy Belgium in two days in May 1940.

On 25 June 1940, the War Department approved the organization of a test platoon of airborne infantry. Two officers and forty-eight enlisted soldiers were chosen from over two-hundred 29th Infantry Regiment volunteers at Fort Benning, Georgia. First Lieutenant (1LT) William T. Ryder commanded the platoon with Lieutenant James A. Bassett as his assistant. Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) William C. Lee, the airborne staff officer for the Chief of Infantry, took the platoon to the Safe Parachute Company in Hightstown, New Jersey. There they trained on the parachute drop towers used in the 1939 World's Fair in New York City. The Army bought four of the towers. They were reassembled at Fort Benning and are still used to train today's airborne students. From 16 to 30 August 1940, the platoon members progressed from individual to

The War Department

During WWII, American ground and air forces were the responsibility of the War Department. The War Department was led by a separate civilian secretary directly responsible to the President of the United States. The War Department was comprised of:

1. The Secretary of War
2. The Assistant Secretary of War
3. The War Department General Staff,

further divided into military staff divisions of Personnel (G-1), Military Intelligence (G-2), Operations and Training (G-3), Supply (G-4) and War Plans Division (WPD).

(This staff was directed by the Chief of Staff of the Army who was the adviser to the Secretary of War and the head of the military establishment.)

4. Offices of the Chiefs of Services and Arms: Infantry, Field Artillery, Coast Artillery, Cavalry, Army Air Forces, Corps of Engineers and Signal Corps.



11th Airborne
Division SSI

Blue
Force



501st Parachute
Infantry Regimental
Insignia



17th Airborne
Division SSI

Red
Force



541st Parachute
Infantry Regimental
Insignia



The B-18A "Bolo", manufactured by Douglas Aviation, was originally selected as the Army's early, multi-engine bomber. Its limited range and speed made it better suited for cargo, transport, anti-submarine or pilot training roles than for combat. On 6 August 1940 1LT William T. Ryder jumped from a B-18A over Cactus Field at Fort Benning, GA earning the title of "America's first paratrooper."

mass parachute jumps using a Douglas B-18A "Bolo" bomber. The Test Platoon's success further fostered activation of the 501st Parachute Infantry Battalion on 26 September 1940. MAJ William M. Miley would command America's first airborne infantry battalion.

The Infantry and Air Corps continued to develop and to refine airborne force requirements from October 1940 until July 1941. The Air Corps began testing gliders and new cargo aircraft. The ultimate demonstration of German airborne capability happened on 20 May 1941. The *Luftwaffe* achieved complete air superiority over British and New Zealand forces on the island of Crete. Then glider and parachute troops landed and gained control of key installations including the island's Maleme Airdrome. The airdrome's importance became obvious when air-transported forces were landed *enmasse* to reinforce airborne forces. The German invasion and capture of Crete was the capstone that ultimately caused the United States War Department to develop its own airborne capability.

At Fort Kobbe, Panama Canal Zone, the U.S. Army formed its first air-landing unit, the 550th Infantry Airborne Battalion reinforced by Company C, 1st Battalion 501st Parachute Infantry. The airborne force was commanded by LTC Harris M. Melasky. In August 1941, the 550th conducted the first major army airborne exercise at the Rio Hato training area.⁶ Lessons were learned: the tactical employment of airborne forces required close staff coordination between air

corps and airborne forces; air to ground communications was a necessity; and aircraft specifically designed to transport ground troops and equipment were needed. As LTC Melasky continued to refine tactical airborne concepts, the Infantry Center was activating more airborne battalions and an airborne command headquarters.

Because the 501st was the only Army parachute battalion in 1941, it was conducting parachute training and providing trained cadre to activate new airborne units. These missions were draining the 501st Parachute Infantry Battalion. MAJ Miley recommended that the Chief of Infantry form a separate unit to train parachute volunteers who would fill new airborne units. The War Department agreed and on 10 March 1941 activated the Provisional Parachute Group headquarters at Fort Benning commanded by LTC William C. Lee.

Following the War Department and Army reorganization on 9 March 1942, the Provisional Parachute Group was designated the Airborne Command on 21 March 1942. Newly promoted Colonel (COL) Lee quickly discovered that individual and unit parachute training was repeatedly interrupted by requests for airborne demonstrations and parachute troop participation in Army Ground Force (AGF) maneuvers. After several complaints by the Chief of Infantry, LTG Leslie J. McNair, Commanding General AGF, decided to keep the parachute training center at Fort Benning, but he transferred the Airborne Command Headquarters to Fort Bragg, NC on 1 May 1942. This move cut down the visitors, but left undecided who would command and control airborne units.

The U.S. Army's rapid activation of parachute and glider regiments elevated the issue of commanding and controlling large-scale airborne operations. The British were already evaluating the type and mix of forces to conduct airborne operations. Now Brigadier General (BG) Lee was sent to England to observe their airborne training and talk with parachute veterans about airborne operations in North Africa, Italy, and France.⁷ This



The C-47 "Sky Train" was the workhorse of the USAAF in every theater of operations. It performed a variety of missions from transporting supplies and equipment to dropping paratroopers and towing gliders. Each paratrooper pictured is equipped with a lowering line for use in the event of a tree landing.

Parachute Units 1940-42: The units here are not intended to be a complete list of all World War II parachute units. They indicate only those active parachute units in the U.S. Army before official designation of airborne divisions on 15 August 1942. The source for this information is Appendix Number 11 of *The Airborne Command and Center Study Number 25*, the Army Ground Forces Historical Section, 1946, written by LTC John T. Ellis Jr.

UNIT	DATE ACTIVATED	COMMANDER
501st PIB	26 September 1940	MAJ William M. Miley
Provisional Parachute Group	10 March 1941	LTC William C. Lee
The Parachute School	15 May 1941	MAJ William M. Miley
502nd PIB	1 July 1941	MAJ George P. Howell, Jr.
503rd PIB ^b	21 August 1941	MAJ Robert F. Sink
504th PIB ^b	5 October 1941	MAJ Richard Chase
502nd PIR	2 March 1942	LTC George P. Howell, Jr.
503rd PIR	2 March 1942	LTC William M. Miley
Airborne Command	21 March 1942	COL William C. Lee
504th PIR	1 May 1942	COL Rueben H. Tucker
505th PIR	6 July 1942	COL James M. Gavin
506th PIR	20 July 1942	COL Robert F. Sink
507th PIR	20 July 1942	LTC George V. Millet
82nd Airborne Division	15 August 1942	MG Matthew B. Ridgway
101st Airborne Division	15 August 1942	MG William C. Lee
Airborne Command	16 August 1942	MG Elbridge G. Chapman

Note a: PIB is Parachute Infantry Battalion; PIR is Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Note b: The 503rd and 504th PIBs were later absorbed into the PIRs with the 503rd PIB becoming the 1st Battalion, 503rd PIR and the 504th PIB becoming the 2nd Battalion, 504th PIR. Both PIRs 3rd Battalions were formed from recent graduates of the Parachute School.



Key personnel in American airborne development (1942). From L to R. General Henry H. Arnold, Chief, USAAF; MG Matthew B. Ridgway, CG, 82nd Airborne Division (A/D); MG Joseph M. Swing, CG, 11th A/D; MG William C. Lee, CG, 101st A/D; MG William M. Miley, CG, 17th A/D; and MG Elbridge G. Chapman, CG, 13th A/D.



Flight route of the 509th PIB on 7 November 1942 in support of Operation TORCH. Source: Gerard M. Devlin, Paratrooper, p. 152.

was when Lee first learned that the British intended to consolidate its airborne units into divisions. After returning, BG Lee recommended to LTG McNair that the American Army follow the British example. Unwilling to make a hasty decision, LTG McNair told him that his staff would study the proposal. Two weeks later, McNair called Lee to tell him that two airborne divisions would be activated by mid-August 1942. No other air-landing units would be formed. Those in existence would be converted to glider infantry and assigned to the airborne divisions.⁸ The Army designated the 82nd and 101st Infantry Divisions as its first two airborne divisions on 15 August 1942. The next step was to get American airborne forces into combat.

The U.S. Army airborne received its “baptism of fire” in North Africa during Operation TORCH. The 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion (PIB) (formerly 2nd Battalion, 503rd Parachute Infantry) commanded by LTC Edson D. Raff was selected for the operation. The 509th PIB had been training in England since June 1942. Its mission was to jump at dawn on 8 November 1942 and seize two Pro-Axis French-controlled airfields south of Oran, Algeria prior to the Allied sea-borne invasion. Thirty-nine C-47 aircraft would carry the PIB 1500 miles non-stop from England during the night of 7-8 November 1942. Nine C-47 loads of paratroopers, led by MAJ William P. Yarborough, (Raff was injured during the jump) conducted a thirty-five mile foot march to the airfield at Tafaraoui, Algeria to discover it already secured by sea-landed ground forces. Poor navigation, strong headwinds, an inoperative Eureka homing device, incorrect radio frequencies supplied to the navigational beacon ship, and the absence of coordination between sea-landing and airborne forces caused the majority of the C-47’s to exhaust their fuel and land wherever they could. After TORCH, the 509th established its headquarters at Oujda, French Morocco.

While the 509th recovered from its first combat operation and prepared for the next, the 82nd Airborne Division arrived in French Morocco on 10 May 1943 to prepare for the invasion of Sicily (Operation HUSKY). The Division Commander, MG Matthew B. Ridgway, and BG Maxwell D. Taylor, the Division Artillery (DIVARTY) commander, established the division headquarters with the two Parachute Infantry Regiments (504th and 505th) at Oujda near the 509th PIB. BG Charles L. Keerans, the Assistant Division Commander, set up his headquarters with the glider infantry regiment (325th) at Marina, twelve miles east of Oujda. Operation HUSKY included four separate airborne operations in Sicily. American and British airborne forces would each conduct two. HUSKY I, assigned to COL James M. Gavin’s reinforced 505th Parachute Regimental Combat Team (PRCT) assault would take place on 10 July 1943 with the British 1st Air Landing Brigade and COL Reuben H. Tucker’s 504th PRCT would conduct HUSKY II on 11 July 1943 with the British 1st Parachute Brigade.

The U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) 52nd Troop Carrier Wing would transport the Allied airborne forces from Kairouan, Tunisia to their glider landings and parachute drop zones on Sicily during the night of 10-11 July 1943. The flight route for the 505th (HUSKY I) was a 415 mile course. It was supposed to be flown in close formation, 200 feet above the water and under black-out conditions. Thirty-five knot ground winds caused the C-47s to drift off course and paratroopers were scattered far from their primary drop zones. The 504th’s infiltration route (HUSKY II) flew over a sea full of Allied troop ships. Prior coordination was in vain. When the HUSKY II aircraft flew over them, the ships opened fire. The Navy gunners had standing orders to shoot at any aircraft. Twenty-three of one hundred and forty-four troop-carrier aircraft were shot down and thirty-seven aircraft were heavily damaged by friendly fire; 318 paratroopers and airmen were killed or wounded. Among the dead was BG Keerans, who was observing in an orbiting C-47 when his aircraft was shot down. The friendly fire broke up the USAAF formation and the paratroopers were widely dispersed.

When Sicily operations officially ended, LTG Eisenhower, the HUSKY invasion force commander, reviewed all American parachute and glider operations. In his after action report to General Marshall, Eisenhower recommended against division-sized airborne units in the United States Army since they were too difficult to control in combat.⁹ The Chief of Staff of the Army considered this, but rather than immediately inactivate the 11th, 13th, 17th, 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, he ordered a special board of officers to examine airborne doctrine, organization and training.

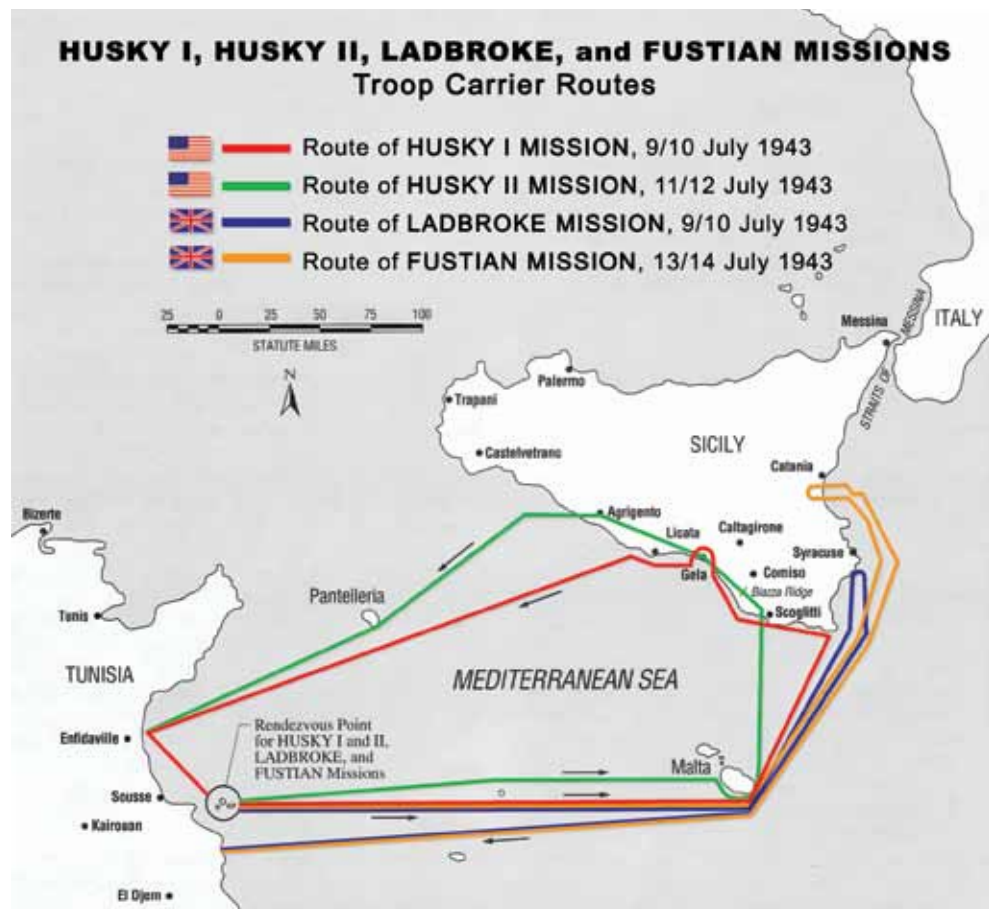
In mid-September 1943, LTG Leslie J. McNair convened a board at Camp Mackall, NC. MG Joseph M. Swing, the 11th Airborne Division commander, chaired what was referred to as the “Swing Board.” The board was charged with developing procedures for planning and executing airborne missions in conjunction

with combined conventional operations.¹⁰ MG Swing was personally chosen to be President of the Board by General Marshall. Swing, who had been Eisenhower's airborne advisor in North Africa, knew the problems, but he still believed in the airborne division concept. The other board members were experienced paratroop and glider unit commanders and staff officers as well as First Troop Carrier Command (I TCC) veterans and glider pilots.¹¹ For two weeks, the board worked around the clock reviewing Axis and Allied airborne operations, studying the airborne division organization, and analyzing the problems encountered by the USAAF troop carrier units during the North African and Sicilian operations. Navigational problems, interservice communications, and airborne command and control were closely evaluated.¹²

At the end of September 1943, the review was completed and the recommendations were sent to the War Department staff. The most important recommendation was the need for closer coordination between airborne units and troop carrier commands. After the War Department had reviewed and discussed the Swing Board's findings, Marshall approved the publication as *War Department Training Circular No. 113; Employment of Airborne and Troop Carrier Forces* dated 9 October 1943. This formalized the responsibilities and relationships between the airborne and troop carrier commands.¹³

Despite the recommendations of the Swing Board, General Marshall and LTG McNair were not convinced that the airborne division would be effective. They wanted proof of the effectiveness of the concept. LTG McNair ordered MG Swing to plan an 11th Airborne maneuver for December 1943 to demonstrate the validity of the airborne division. It was very obvious that the future of the airborne division depended entirely upon a successful maneuver.

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, who also had reservations about the utility of the airborne division, visited Camp Mackall on 23-24 November 1943. There he watched a division (-) infantry-artillery, parachute-glider demonstration called the "Pea Patch Show," so called because it took place on a piece of land once used to grow peas.¹⁴ Stimson was favorably impressed by the exercise,



Flight routes for British and American airborne forces during the invasion of Sicily in July 1943. Source: Charles H. Young, Into the Valley, p. 18.

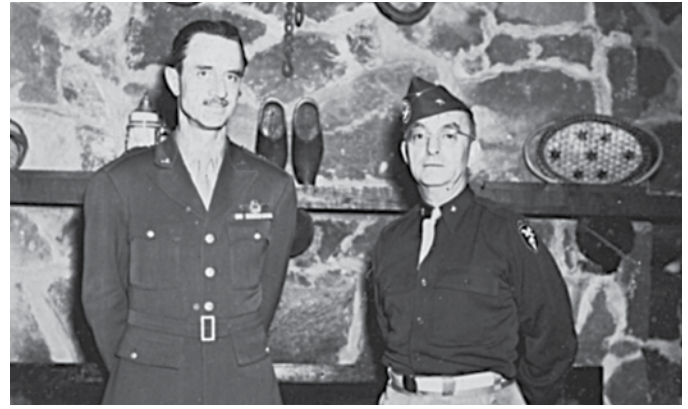
and on 27 November 1943 wrote General Swing: "The Airborne Division will play a great part in our future successes, and I know that the 11th Airborne Division will render outstanding service to our country on some not too far distant D Day."¹⁵ However, the small-scale of the exercise was not sufficient to convince Marshall and McNair. They would delay their decision on the airborne division's future until after the Knollwood Maneuver.

U.S. Army airborne operations in North Africa and Sicily had identified certain issues that continued to raise doubts among Army leaders about the usefulness of airborne divisions. The upcoming exercise in December 1943 would confirm or dispel these reservations. Camp Mackall, NC was the logical site for the airborne division maneuver. It was the only U.S. Army installation established solely for training, testing and evaluating equipment, tactics, techniques and procedures for paratroopers, glidermen and troop transport pilots and crews. The Airborne Command had the responsibility to validate airborne doctrine and equipment. The retention of the airborne division in the Army's force structure was at stake. Preparation for the Knollwood Maneuver began in earnest in November 1943.

Between General Marshall's decision to test the airborne division concept and the Pea Patch Show for Secretary of War Stimson, the airborne-troop carrier headquarters was moved to Camp Mackall on 12 November 1943.



23-24 November 1943. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson accompanied by BG Frederick W. Evans, CG I TCC and MAJ Michael C. Murphy, Director of Flying Training for I TCC headed to the "Pea Patch Show."



From L to R. BG Frederick W. Evans, CG, I TCC and BG Leo Donovan, CG Airborne Command in front of the fireplace in the VIP briefing cabin at Camp Mackall. This same cabin today houses Camp Mackall's Range Control office.

BG Frederick W. Evans, CG I TCC at Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base (L-MAAB), was named the Maneuver Director and BG Leo Donovan, CG of the Airborne Command at Camp Mackall, was his deputy. The combined maneuver would be conducted from 6 to 10 December 1943.¹⁶ The concept of the operation, based entirely on Training Circular No. 113, *Employment of Airborne and Troop Carrier Forces*, October 9, 1943, involved staging airborne and glider elements of the 11th Airborne Division from Pope Army Airfield, Mackall Army Airfield, Florence, SC, Lumberton and Laurinburg-Maxton airfields. These separate echelons would take-off and rendezvous in-flight near the Atlantic coast. Then, the armada would fly a circuitous route of approximately two-hundred miles, a portion of which would be over open-ocean at night before turning inland toward the drop and landing zones. At least one-half of the airborne force would land at night. All reinforcement, resupply, evacuation, and other support requirements would be done by air.¹⁷

There were four critical questions to be answered:

1. Could a large airborne force, of division size, travel over a three- to four-hour instrument course across a large body of water and arrive at precisely selected drop zones?
2. Could such a force land in gliders and by parachute without excessive casualties?
3. Could a division so landed wage sustained combat?
4. Could a division so landed be supplied by air and air landings alone?¹⁸

All that remained was to write the operations order.

On 15 November 1943, the 11th Airborne Division received its mission from the Headquarters, Airborne Command at Camp Mackall. The 11th Airborne Division, reinforced by the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) was to assault on D-Day, 7 December 1943, capture Aberdeen, NC and Knollwood Airport (now known as the Moore County Regional Airport), establish an airhead around Knollwood Airport, and prevent reinforcement of the Red Army at Raeford, NC (17th Airborne and 541st PIR) from the north and northwest.¹⁹ Defending Knollwood and selected critical points was a regiment combat team (minus). An infantry battalion, an antitank company, a field artillery battery and a medical detachment from the 17th Airborne Division were combined with a battalion from COL Ducat M. McEntee's independent 541st Parachute Infantry Regiment. These elements were training at Camp Mackall.²⁰

On 4 December 1943, units of the 11th Airborne Division began leaving Camp Mackall for their respective departure airfields. The original plan called for all units to take off on the night of 5 December, but inclement weather postponed the attack for twenty-four hours. LTG McNair was the maneuver's chief umpire and evaluator. Undersecretary of War Robert Patterson, MG Matthew B. Ridgway, and BG Leo Donovan were observers. About midnight, 6 December 1943, 200 C-47s began taking off from the airfields in North and South Carolina for the mass airborne assault. Numerous C-47s carried a full load of eighteen combat-equipped paratroopers and



1st Troop Carrier Command
Insignia



Airborne Command
SSI



675th Glider Field Artillery
Battalion DUI



Knollwood Army Auxiliary Airfield now Moore County Regional Airport as it appears today. The visible open areas became drop and landing zones for parachute and glider forces during the airborne assault on Knollwood on 7 December 1943.

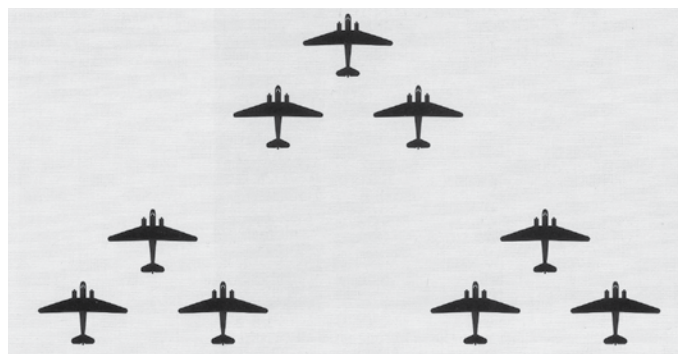


LTG Leslie J. McNair, CG, Army Ground Forces (AGF), confers with BG Donovan during the Knollwood Maneuver.

towed either one or two gliders full of soldiers and equipment. As the C-47's took off, the planes and gliders began forming into "Vee of Vee" formations, nine aircraft wide. The air armada flew east out over the Atlantic Ocean, then turned north and finally turned back west heading towards the drop zones and landing zones around Southern Pines and Pinehurst. Golf courses and open fields between five and ten miles west and north of Knollwood Airport had been designated as drop zones and landing zones.²¹ The assault began at 2:30 a.m. on 7 December 1943 with the gliders and paratroopers landing almost simultaneously.

Having survived his glider's collision with the farmhouse, MAJ Robert L. Johnson continued locating the 675th howitzers, getting fire support for the division established and assembling the unit. The Battalion Executive Officer (XO) had not been "drafted" into becoming a "glider rider." He had been "recruited" by COL Francis W. Farrell, the 11th Airborne Division Chief of Staff. COL Farrell supervised Johnson as an artillery instructor in the Gunnery Department at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. When Johnson reported to Camp Mackall in December 1942, he was assigned to the 675th Glider Field Artillery Battalion. Glider artillery battalions at that time had two batteries with six 75mm Pack Howitzers each and one battery of eight .50 caliber anti-aircraft machine guns and four 37mm anti-tank guns.²² Although glidermen and paratroopers shared the same hazards on the battlefield, there was a distinct line between the two groups. The majority of glidermen were assigned to fill requirements while all paratroopers were volunteers.

The majority of glider training was conducted at Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base (L-MAAB). It consisted of equipment loading, weight distribution and

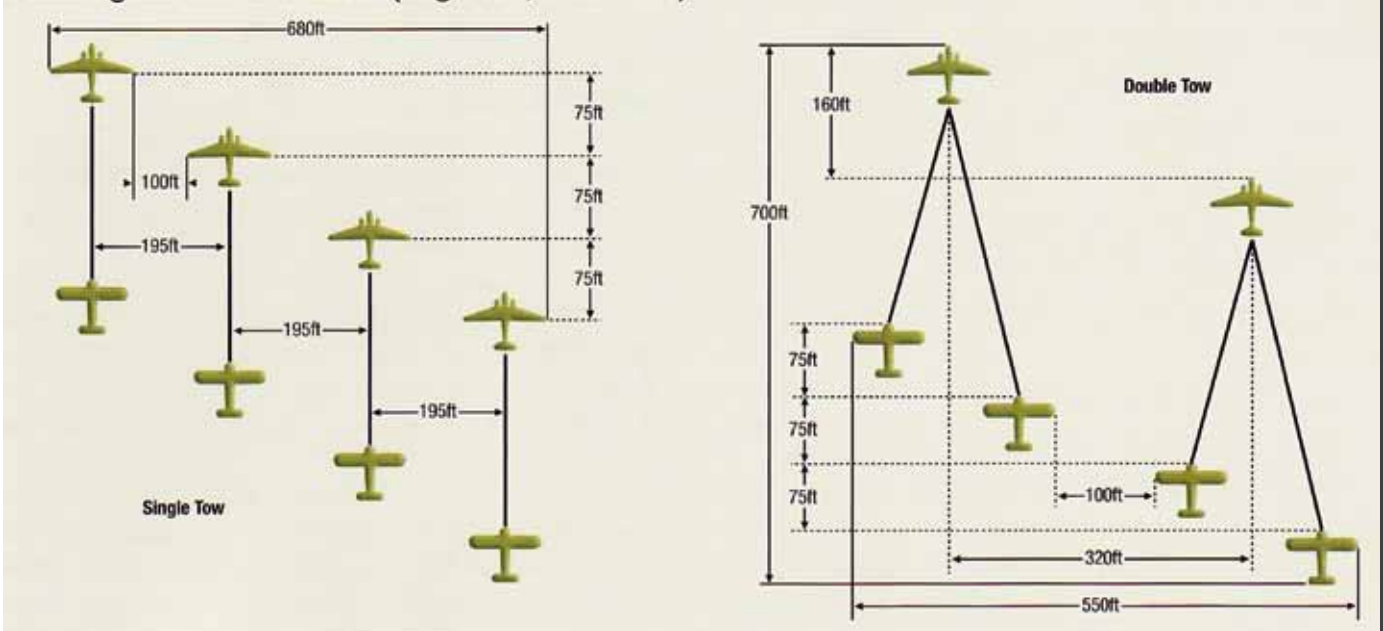


Standard squadron flight formation known as a "Vee of Vees" employed by troop carrier command aircraft during a parachute drop of men and equipment. Source: Steven J. Zaloga, US Airborne Divisions in the ETO 1944-45, p.50.

cross-loading of key personnel (spreading the leaders among the available aircraft). To become authorized to wear the glider qualification badge and overseas cap patch, each soldier made one glider flight. It took five parachute jumps to become a fully qualified parachutist who could wear the parachute badge, the distinctive overseas cap patch and Corcoran jump boots. As General Johnson later observed: "The differences between the qualification standards for glidermen and paratroopers created a strong competition between the two groups despite General Swing's intent to have as many men as possible dual-qualified in the 11th Airborne Division."²³ Despite their differences, the paratroopers and glidermen realized the future of the airborne division rested upon their united efforts during the Knollwood Maneuver.

The first division-sized night air assault had its share of problems. The missions of the 187th and 188th

Assault glider tow formations (single tow, double tow)



Assault Glider Tow Formation showing the preferred spacing for towing single and double loads of gliders by C-47s flying an echelon right formation. Source: Steven J. Zaloga, US Airborne Divisions in the ETO 1944-45, p. 49.

Glider Infantry Regiments (GIR) dictated that they land around Knollwood to secure the airhead. This would allow supplies and reinforcements to be air-landed on the airfield. The 11th Airborne DIVARTY, which included the 675th, was positioned west of Pinehurst to provide fire support for the parachute infantry. As expected, a number of the gliders carrying the howitzers missed their landing zones. Some ended up in the tops of tall pine trees or entangled in power lines (the electricity was turned off). As Johnson located his battalion's howitzers, he hooked them to his jeep and moved them into position to support the infantry. The Fire Direction Center was established in the open. Wire connected the units to DIVARTY and jeep-mounted radios were the link to division headquarters. Metal crickets like those later used on D-Day in Normandy identified the 11th Airborne personnel. The 675th GFAB had only one serious casualty. A trailer of medical supplies broke loose when its glider landed and broke the battalion supply officer's legs.²⁴

The 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment dropped on and around the Knollwood Airfield and by 0230 hours on 7 December 1943 had secured the objective. Some of the

paratroopers and gliders missed their drop and landing zones and road marched to rejoin their units. The glider carrying the 11th Airborne Chief of Staff, COL Farrell, landed on a road in the Fort Bragg Artillery Range. From the moment Knollwood was secured, a steady stream of aircraft, loaded with men and all classes of supply, began landing on the airfield to expand the airhead. Combat operations between the 11th (Blue Force) and the Red Army force (elements of the 17th Airborne Division) continued until the maneuver was ended on 12 December 1943 by LTG McNair.²⁵

Deteriorating weather conditions made the results of the Knollwood Maneuver more impressive. Temperatures plummeted during the day on 7 December and rain turned to sleet. The 53rd Troop Carrier Wing First Troop Carrier Command (I TCC) provided L-MAAB 200 C-47 transport aircraft and towed 234 CG-4A gliders; 100 gliders were double-towed. In thirty-nine hours, a total of 10,282 men were delivered by parachute, glider, or air landed. The tally of equipment and supplies was significant: 1,830 tons of supplies and equipment; 295 Jeeps; and 48 quarter ton trailers. The total maneuver casualties were two dead and 48 minor injuries.²⁶ Afterwards, the



511th Parachute
Infantry Regimental
Insignia



187th Glider Infantry
Regimental Insignia



188th Glider Infantry
Regimental Insignia

entire operation was reviewed from start to finish at Camp Mackall by commanders and the division staff. MG Joseph Swing submitted his final report on the Knollwood Maneuver to LTG Leslie McNair and impatiently waited for a War Department decision. On 16 December 1943, LTG McNair replied to MG Swing. McNair's message in part read: "...The successful performance of your division has convinced me that we were wrong, and I shall now recommend that we continue our present schedule of activating, training and committing airborne divisions."²⁷

The Knollwood Maneuver convinced General Marshall and LTG McNair to retain the airborne divisions. The successful execution of all missions by the 11th Airborne Division validated the concepts in *Training Circular No. 113* concerning employment and support of airborne forces. As a result, significant portions of TC 113 were included verbatim in *War Department Field Manual (FM) 71-30, Employment of Airborne Forces*, dated 3 July 1947 and *War Department Field Manual 1-30, Tactical Doctrine of Troop Carrier Aviation*, dated 12 August 1947. FM 1-30 became the "Bible" for troop carrier operations in support of airborne forces.²⁸ The Knollwood Maneuver had saved the 11th, 13th, 17th, 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. Camp Mackall and Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base would continue to be training centers for airborne forces throughout World War II. Today, Camp Mackall has a similar distinction as the Army's training center for Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations soldiers.

Special thanks for assistance in preparing this article go to Brigadier General (Ret) Robert L. Johnson, Master Sergeant (Ret) Lowell W. Stevens, Mr. Tom MacCallum, Mr. Alejandro Lujan and Ms. Kathryn Beach who unselfishly provided their time and talents to ensure the accuracy of the information presented here.

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CG-4A "WACO" gliders ready for loading. Notice the pilot's compartment in the raised nose section and the wooden supports used to elevate the tail to keep the cargo compartment on the ground. This technique made it easier to load bulky supplies and equipment into the glider.

Endnotes:

1. Lane Toomey, "Where Airborne Proved Itself," *The Pilot.com*, 3 December 2003, 2.
2. Gerard M. Devlin, *Paratrooper* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 246.
3. Devlin, *Paratrooper*, 23.
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BUILDING EL SALVADOR'S AIRBORNE

PART I

By Charles H. Briscoe

El Salvador, one of the smallest (geographically, the size of Massachusetts) and most densely populated countries in the world, was plagued by organized insurgency for thirteen years during the 1980s and early 1990s. Throughout that conflict Army special operations forces (ARSOF) did an exceptional job, performing a wide variety of foreign internal defense (FID) missions to support U.S. Military Group (MILGP) efforts to help the Salvadoran government fight its counterinsurgency (COIN) war. Professional relationships with the armed forces of Latin America were established by Special Forces (SF) teams in the 1960s, when Communists were fomenting "wars of national liberation" throughout the region.

The purpose of this article is to explain the 8th SF Group [Special Action Force Latin America (SAFLA)] mission to provide airborne Ranger infantry training to a select group of Salvadoran officers and sergeants in 1963. These leaders were slated to cadre the first airborne company in the armed forces of El Salvador (ESAF). It proved to be the first COIN training for the Salvadoran military and the airborne Ranger graduates were instrumental in raising the level of professionalism of the ESAF. Some from this original group later commanded with distinction during the thirteen-year war against the rebel FMLN (*Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional*). But, the impact of this specialized training was not realized by the SF Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) commander at the time.

Captain (CPT) Richard F. Carvell, ODA-3 commander, A Company, 8th Special Forces Group (SFG), 1st Special Forces (SAFLA) had led a MTT (mobile Training Team) to Chile from September through December 1962 to train a Commando force. The commendation letters for that mission had just filtered down to 8th SFG headquarters when Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, the group commander, gave Carvell the mission to conduct a Ranger course for a select group of Salvadoran officers and sergeants arriving on 2 May 1963. Training was originally to begin on 6 May. The ODA-3 members scrambled to prepare

a program of instruction (POI), publish a training schedule, and translate lesson plans and handouts into Spanish. The team had to assemble training aids and special equipment, arrange medical support, request ammunition and explosives, transportation, and training areas for the Salvadoran group.¹

The ODA-3 commander had several advantages. As a private, Carvell had received six weeks of Ranger training, the Infantry School standard POI for Airborne Ranger companies during the Korean War and had served in combat with the 1st Airborne Ranger Company. CPT Carvell was just finishing two years as a Lane Instructor (LI) in the Ranger Department (Fort Benning phase) when LTC Simons came recruiting for SF. And, the Chilean Commando course POI in Spanish that he conducted six-months earlier was a compressed version of the nine-week U.S. Army Ranger course.²

The training was part of the Alliance for Progress initiated by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, and followed the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. It was



President
John F. Kennedy.



The United States commemorated the Alliance for Progress in 1963 with a 5 Cent postage stamp.

8th Special Forces Group

Plans to activate a new Special Forces Group in Panama were classified in 1962 with the codename "Project Blue Arrow." A provisional unit, D Company, "the Spanish Company," 7th SFG, Fort Bragg, NC, was formed to be the nucleus of the new 8th SF group that would have two companies assigned, instead of three. The "Spanish Company" of 7th SFG deployed MTTs to Guatemala, Venezuela, and Honduras from Fort Bragg before moving to Panama.

The second element of the advance echelon (ADVON) for Panama included Captains Al Buckalew, Richard Carvell, and Sherry Awtrey, Master Sergeants (MSG) Paul Darcy and Dick Meadows, and Sergeant (SGT) Joe López. They flew to Panama from Pope Air Force Base on 10 July 1962. They were met by Major (MAJ) Johnny Reus-Froylan, First Lieutenant (1LT) James Rougeau, the Assistant S-4 (logistics), and the supply sergeant, Sergeant First Class (SFC) José Ibarra, at Howard Air Base on the Pacific side. The ADVON eventually totaled eleven officers and forty-nine enlisted men.⁵

D Company, 7th SFG was assigned to U.S. Army Caribbean. CPT Carvell became the ADVON officer in charge (OIC) when CPT Buckalew fell sick and had to be hospitalized. The advance party signed for troop billets, temporary housing, and station property (furniture, bedding, and safes), arranged transportation, established the ammunition accounts, evaluated training areas, and looked for drop zones

(DZs).⁶ They were preparing for the main body's arrival by ship in mid-August.

The D Company, 7th SFG commander, MAJ Melvin J. Soward, leading the main body, left Fort Bragg by train on 2 August 1962 headed for New York City to board the USNS *Geiger* in the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

After stopping at Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, and Guantanamo, Cuba, the *Geiger* docked at Pier 8, Cristobal, Canal Zone, on 11 August 1962. The ADVON met the ship with a variety of vehicles to carry personnel and equipment across the isthmus to Fort Gulick. The 9th Psychological Operations (PSYOP) Battalion and the 146th Engineer, 255th Medical, 3rd Civil Affairs (CA), 550th Military Police, 610th Military Intelligence, and the 401st ASA (Army Security Agency) Special Operations detachments were assigned to form the new Special Action Force Latin America (SAFLA).

LTC John H. Sawyer commanded SAFLA until LTC Arthur D. "Bull" Simons arrived in January 1963. USARCARIB General Order Number 20 activated the 8th SFG on 1 April 1963. A week later, B Company, 8th SFG was activated and the 3rd CA Detachment was reassigned to U.S. Army Forces Southern Command (USARSO), the former USARCARIB headquarters. The 8th SFG signal company became E Company on 14 March 1964.⁷ On 30 June 1972, 8th SFG was deactivated and redesignated 3rd Battalion, 7th SFG.



8th Special Forces
Group Flash

designed to prepare Latin American militaries to combat the rise of Communist-inspired insurgencies in the region and to professionalize their officer and emerging NCO corps. In the initial years of the Alliance, the United States government gave more weight to economic assistance and social reforms than military aid to counter insurgency. Since El Salvador was becoming the dominant economic power in Central America, its military leaders were receptive to training special elements to combat insurgent threats.³

Artillery battery commander CPT José Eduardo Iraheta Castellon had been selected by the *Estado Mayor* (ESAF headquarters) to attend a ten-week COIN course for Latin American officers conducted by U.S. Army Caribbean (USARCARIB) in early 1962. CPT Iraheta had earlier attended a USARCARIB intelligence course in Panama. Coincidentally, CPT Carvell was one of the two SF trainees at the Special Warfare School, Fort Bragg,

NC, sent to attend that same COIN course. Carvell had gone to Spanish language school before reporting for SF training. Afterwards, this USARCARIB course was substituted for the final SF field training exercise (FTX) and Carvell was assigned to D Company, 7th SFG, for a classified assignment [the advance echelon (ADVON) for 8th SFG in Panama]. After CPT Iraheta returned home, he learned that the *Estado Mayor* was seeking volunteers for parachute training at Fort Benning, Georgia.⁴

To CPT Iraheta's good fortune, CPT Edwin G. Scribner, the officer in the U.S. Army Mission, Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG), El Salvador, charged with coordinating the Fort Benning training, was an airborne-qualified artillerymen. He knew CPT Iraheta because the Salvadoran military had only one 105mm artillery battalion. Having just completed the COIN course in Panama, Iraheta had an advantage over three other captain volunteers and was chosen. CPT José Iraheta

was to become El Salvador's first airborne commander. Five lieutenants and eleven sergeants were selected to accompany him to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, for an eight-week English course before beginning parachute training at Fort Benning. CPT Scribner arranged thorough medical examinations, administered a physical training (PT) test, explained the three phases of airborne training, demonstrated the parachute landing fall (PLF), and emphasized the importance of physical fitness. The seventeen Salvadoran soldiers flew to the United States in January 1963.⁸

Airborne School at Fort Benning proved to be quite different than language training. "At Lackland, we did PT by ourselves after class. It was very easy compared to what we had to do in Jump School. We received two weeks of airborne PT every day to get ready, running twice each day, before being assigned to 42nd Company. Our English was very basic. We did not have an interpreter

"...What we tried to do was to keep the toughness in and the non-essentials out..."

to help us and none of the instructors spoke Spanish. We watched what the other students were doing and imitated them. Two commands, 'Drop and give me ten' (push-ups) and 'double time' were learned very quickly," chuckled Iraheta. "The 250-foot tower jump during the second week was like a carnival ride. Although all five parachute jumps from a C-119 were during daylight, a few made 'night' jumps (with their eyes closed)."⁹ Still, seventeen Salvadoran soldiers stood very tall in mid-April 1963 when they were awarded Army parachutist badges on Fryar Field.

The next challenges facing these Salvadoran airborne "pathfinders" were Ranger training and parachute rigging. After sightseeing in Atlanta, the Central Americans boarded a commercial flight to Panama. Although foreign military students regularly attended Ranger School, fluency was critical because all instruction and examinations during the nine-week course were given in English. The Infantry School did not think that their language abilities would be sufficient. Unable to dedicate a Spanish-speaking Ranger instructor to assist the Salvadorans, Department of the Army assigned the mission to the 8th SFG in Panama.¹⁰ When the Salvadoran group arrived at Fort Gulick, Panama Canal Zone, five ESAF sergeants (Porras, Avalos, and three others) were split off to become parachute riggers. They were attached to the 8th SFG rigger detachment. The remaining twelve officers and sergeants were assigned to ODA-3 for Ranger training.¹¹

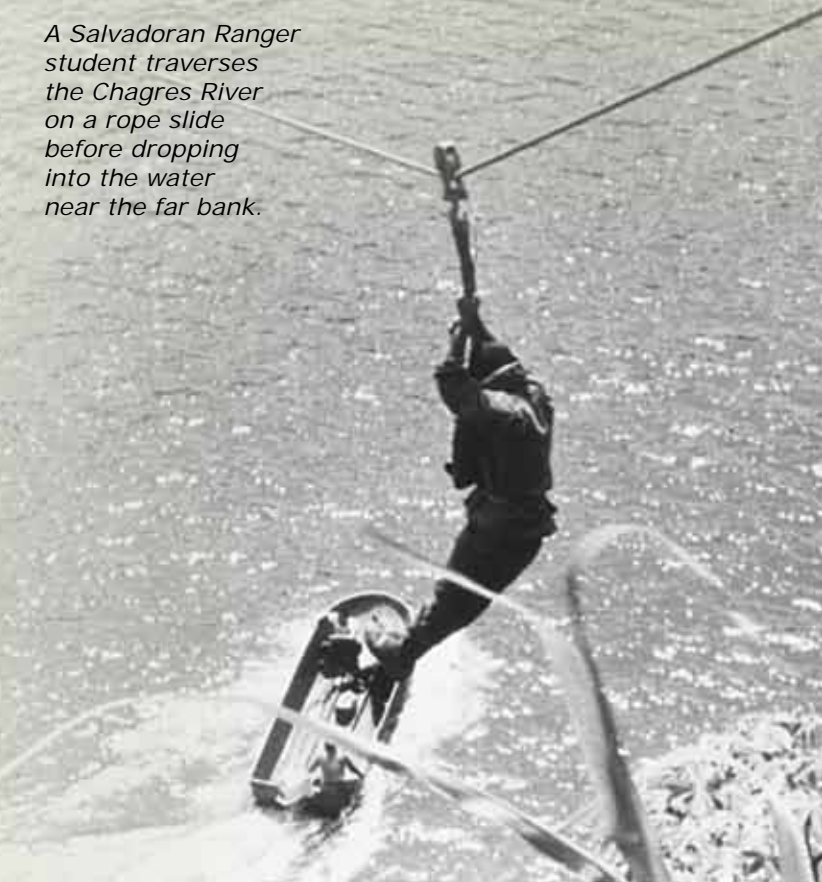
The nine-week U.S. Army Ranger course was compressed to five weeks. It was done by eight instructors training day and night seven days a week, much like CPT

Carvell remembered from his days as a Ranger private in 1951. "The training was by no means watered down. In fact, we gave them a few things that they would not have gotten at Fort Benning, like the exfiltration (escape, survival, and evasion) problem and the airborne drop. What we tried to do was to keep the toughness in and the non-essentials out," said the ODA-3 commander.¹²

The course was divided in half. An instructional phase preceded the practical application in the field. While the Salvadoran students were billeted in the Fort Gulick BOQ (Bachelor Officers Quarters), they spent most of their time in the field where the vast majority of the training was conducted. Classrooms in the USARCARIB School [predecessor to the U.S. Army School of the Americas (USARSA) and Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) at Fort Benning today] and the outdoor class sites at the Jungle Warfare Training Center, Fort Sherman, were used during the first phase.¹³

The training day started with an hour or two of physical conditioning (PT, hand-to-hand combat, bayonet drills, and speed marches with full combat equipment that progressively grew to 15 kilometers). Ranger tactics and techniques followed refresher training on basic soldier skills and small unit infantry tactics. Map reading and compass work were critical because the day and night compass courses were conducted in dense triple canopy jungle. Rappelling and confidence tests (commando crawl on a rope to cross a river, rope drop, and "slide for life") were done using the steep cliffs along the Chagres River. SF explosives and demolition training was conducted on Banana Island in Gatun Lake.¹⁴ These classes followed a "train the trainer" philosophy and were the building blocks for the field training exercises in the second phase.

A Salvadoran Ranger student traverses the Chagres River on a rope slide before dropping into the water near the far bank.





During survival training Salvadoran Ranger students cooked their dinner over an open fire.



CPT Richard Carvell explains how to inflate the RB-15.



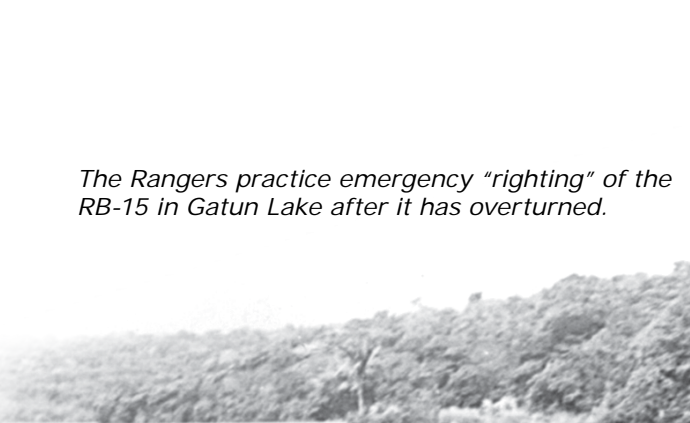
CPT José Eduardo Iraheta and the other Salvadoran Ranger students practice loading the RB-15 aboard a Landing Craft, Medium (LCM) on the shore of Gatun Lake.



The Salvadoran Ranger students learned the importance of balancing and sharing the RB-15 load during land movement.



Salvadoran Ranger students paddle the RB-15 on Gatun Lake.

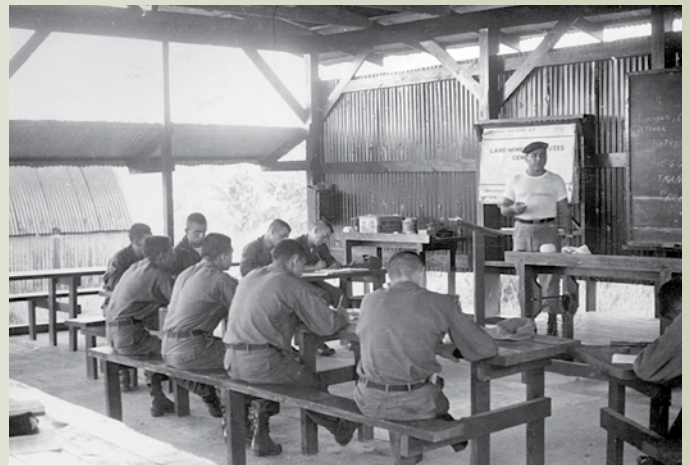


The Rangers practice emergency "righting" of the RB-15 in Gatun Lake after it has overturned.





CPT Richard Carvell, ODA-3, served in the 1st Ranger Company during the Korean War.



MSG Pedro "Pete" Sanchez, ODA-3, teaches the proper use of land mines to the Salvadoran Ranger students on Banana Island in Lake Gatun.



Salvadoran Ranger students had some classes in the USARCARIB School at Fort Gulick.





Salvadoran Ranger students practice splinting a broken leg during First Aid training at Fort Gulick.



CPT Richard Carvell (2nd from left) and an ODA-3 NCO with the twelve Salvadoran Ranger students on the first day of training.



USARSO commander, MG T.F. Bogart, visited CPT Richard Carvell and ODA-3 on Banana Island in Gatun Lake where the Salvadorans were receiving Ranger training. CPT Iraheta is at the far left.



MSG Pedro "Pete" Sanchez and another ODA-3 instructor in their tent on the backside of Howard AFB.

Salvadoran Ranger students practice bayonet drills using M-1 Garand rifles with fixed, sheathed bayonets.



Det 3, 1st AC Wing

Detachment 3, 1st Air Commando Group, U.S. Air Force Special Air Warfare Tactical Air Command, was activated at Hurlburt Field, Florida, on 30 April 1962, specifically to conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) training in Latin America. Twenty-two officers and forty-eight airmen deployed to Howard Air Force Base, Panama Canal Zone with two C-46 "Commando" transports, two T-28 "Trojan" basic trainers, and two L-28 (later U-10) Super Couriers STOL (short takeoff & landing) liaison aircraft on 15 May 1962 as part of project BOLD VENTURE. Two B-26 (later A-26) "Invader" light bombers were assigned in June to meet the increased 7th Special Forces Group requirements and to provide more capability to train the Latin American air forces. The 1st Air Commando Group was redesignated the 1st Air Commando Wing (ACW) on 1 June 1963. A C-46 (parachute drop on Río Hato) and a B-26 (photo reconnaissance) from Detachment 3, 1st ACW supported the 8th SFG Salvadoran Ranger MTT (May-June 1963). The Air Commando L-28/U-10 "Super Couriers" were used regularly to drop leaflets prepared by the 9th Psychological Warfare Battalion, 8th SFG Special Action Force, Latin America (SAFLA).¹⁶



The B-26 "Invader," a light bomber, was also used for photo reconnaissance.



World War II-era C-46 "Commando" transport.



The T-28 "Trojan," a basic trainer for all U.S. services, was armed with machine-guns and could carry rockets and bombs for close air support (CAS) missions.



The L-28/U-10 "Super Courier," STOL (short takeoff and landing) capable, liaison aircraft was ideal for delivering propaganda leaflets and carrying civic action teams into remote areas of Latin America.

While training the Salvadorans in Ranger day and night tactics and techniques that included survival, fieldcraft, and jungle, mountain, rubber boat, and airborne operations, the MTT provided leader training and strived to qualify them as instructors. All of Phase II was done from their base camp in the Jungle Warfare School training area. Individual shelters were constructed, a cooking area set up, and a small planning facility prepared. All four operations were planned there. The first, rather than the final one, was actually the most complicated.¹⁵

Eleven Salvadoran Ranger students (one sergeant was injured in Phase I) conducted a night parachute assault into the Río Hato training area on the Pacific side of the

isthmus, south of the Canal Zone. During Operation JUST CAUSE in 1989, Río Hato was the 2nd Ranger Battalion objective (General Manuel Noriega's beach house and a *Guardia Nacional* base). The Salvadoran Ranger students and SF cadre established a base on the far side of the Howard Air Force Base runway near the ammunition storage bunkers. In isolation they planned the Río Hato raid mission. A C-46 transport from Detachment 3, 1st Air Commando, supported the mission.

Forty minutes after takeoff the "green light" came on over the Pacific Ocean and the Salvadoran Rangers and their SF instructors jumped out into the darkness. After assembling, the Salvadorans made contact with



Map of Panama with 1963 Salvadoran Ranger training sites highlighted.

a friendly partisan who led them to an “enemy corps artillery headquarters.” Their primary mission was to capture an “enemy general,” so surprise was important. They accomplished that task, but had to fight continuous rearguard actions as they moved their prisoner to an exfiltration site. As they finished setting up lights, the Air Commando transport circling high overhead was called in to extract them. The C-46 swooped down out of the darkness and with the engines running, the Rangers loaded their captive and scrambled in behind him. Mission accomplished.¹⁷

All aspects of the operation went very well. That was amazing since the airborne assault was the “cherry” jump (the first after airborne school) for the Salvadorans. It was their first night jump, their first mass tactical combat equipment jump, their first C-46 aircraft jump, and their first joint operation (with Air Force support).¹⁸ ODA-3 Sergeants Pedro Sanchez (Operations Sergeant), Adrian Rodriguez, and José Garza, commented that the Salvadoran soldiers liked the challenge of Ranger training and were dealing well with the constant pressure. CPT José Iraheta said, “The course was both interesting and thorough.” First Sergeant David José Ulloa declared that “it was the best training they had ever received.”¹⁹ The second operation confirmed those assessments.

This time the Salvadorans were divided into two long-range reconnaissance patrols to observe and collect intelligence on several objectives in the Piña Beach area of Fort Sherman about ten miles away. The recon patrols had to infiltrate the area at night paddling RB-7 rubber assault boats on the rivers. This required skillful water



Salvadoran Ranger students aboard an Air Commando C-46 enroute to Río Hato to raid an aggressor headquarters to capture a senior officer as part of their field training.

navigation, camouflaged concealment of the boats, security, and stealthy approaches and retreats. The SF cadre rotated leadership roles during the various phases of the operation. Both recon patrols accomplished their missions without incident and returned undetected to their base camp.²⁰ It appeared that the Salvadoran Ranger students were “on a roll” until the third exercise.

The mission was to conduct a deliberate daylight ambush of a vehicle convoy along a road. The combat patrol, carrying RB-7 rubber boats, boarded an Army LCM (Landing Craft, Medium) for a night offshore boat



CPT Richard Carvell evaluates the preparations of the Salvadoran Ranger students before their reconnaissance patrols to Piña Beach.



The Salvadoran Ranger students search the ambushed convoy for equipment and documents.



SGT (then CPL) Luís Mariano Turcios (L) poses with his machinegun crew in El Salvador. This is a French produced Hotchkiss M1914 8mm machinegun. LTC Turcios led the ESAF Airborne Battalion for five years and then as a colonel, commanded the 6th Brigade, during the war.

launch. The LCM crew had not practiced this maneuver and they dropped the boat ramp almost 180 degrees. As seawater flooded in threatening to swamp the landing craft, the coxswain standing above them in the stern, immediately threw the boat into reverse, throttled to full power, and frantically pulled up the ramp. The "cargo" (Salvadoran Rangers and SF cadre standing in the bow ready to launch the RB-7s) were tossed "helter skelter" down into a foot of water that covered the cargo compartment deck. That rattled everyone aboard.²¹

After that inauspicious start the operation proceeded. Paddling and navigating an RB-7 in the Caribbean proved to be a major challenge, but the boat crews reached their unloading sites on the beach without being discovered. The rubber boats were quickly hidden in the dense vegetation of the Mandinga mangrove swamps.

"...The Rangers easily slipped away and got back to their boats before sundown."

The Salvadoran Rangers managed to get into position at the ambush site undetected before daylight. CPT Carvell related, "I purposefully arranged the convoy for late afternoon to increase stress, discomfort from the tropical heat, and cause sleepiness. Still, the ambush was well executed. The Rangers easily slipped away and got back to their boats before sundown."²² Sergeant Luís Mariano Turcios remembered, "that we let the air out of some vehicle tires before departing and stole the aggressors' food and cigarettes. It seemed like we were always hungry and short of sleep."²³

But, this time the "enemy" was waiting and attacked with surprising fury. "We told the Salvadorans to break contact, form two to three-man groups, and evade the "enemy" by navigating overland to their base. This situation change caught the Salvadorans completely by surprise. They were not mentally prepared nor flexible enough to deal with the unexpected," remembered CPT Carvell. "We spent much of the next day driving the roads of Fort Sherman to round them up. Still, it was a good exercise, a critical lesson, and something that they needed."²⁴ SGT Luís Mariano Turcios recalled "that this was the toughest part of the course. We spent the afternoon and early evening hiding, then the rest of the night thrashing around in the mangrove swamps. By daybreak we were exhausted, but we could see where we were going."²⁵

The fourth and last operation, by necessity, was incorporated into the annual 8th SFG FTX (field training exercise) MANDINGA, to share the available support and to have a more realistic Ranger employment scenario. The Salvadoran Ranger student patrols, supported by local guerrilla bands, were to raid specific installations on an uninhabited island off San Blas Point. The idea was



Ranger course graduate SGT Luis Mariano Turcios in dress uniform wearing the U.S. Army and ESAF parachutist badges. The size difference is quite evident.²⁹



The original solid brass El Salvadoran parachute, worn above the left breast uniform pocket and then on a black beret, was about one and half times larger than the US Army parachute badge.



The El Salvadoran Armed Forces created this Comando tab for the Ranger course graduates. The gold and black tab (same colors as the U.S. Army Ranger tab) was to be worn above the unit shoulder insignia.

good, but SFOB (SF Operating Base = 8th SFG headquarters in the field) coordination was poor. Supporting a local MTT training requirement was not a priority and the required LCM was not scheduled. Since the landing craft were based at Rodman Naval Station on the Pacific side, the LCM had to transit the Panama Canal locks and cross Gatun Lake, a several hour procedure.²⁶

A delayed departure time from San Blas Point near Fort Sherman negated a rubber boat approach to the targets (WWII coastal artillery radio towers on *Isla Rosado*) in darkness. Then, the night operation became a daylight raid when the guerrilla beach reception party was not there to safely guide the LCM through the coral reef to the landing site. The Ranger raiding party bobbed offshore until daybreak as the MTT instructors gritted their teeth in frustration. Still, the raiders surprised the enemy guarding the installations on the island, and accomplished their mission without incident.²⁷ CPT Carvell and the Ranger MTT cadre had pushed the Salvadoran officers and sergeants hard for five weeks and they had proved themselves capable.

A formal graduation ceremony was held at the USARCARIB School on 14 June 1963. The eleven Ranger Course graduates were awarded USARCARIB diplomas and everyone received 8th SFG certificates of training. Officer and NCO Ranger Honor Graduates were

presented letters of academic achievement signed by LTC Simons. Class standing was based on a point system that took into account practical examinations, individual PT test scores, peer evaluations, and cadre assessments of field exercise leadership performances. While the U.S. Army Ranger tab was not awarded for the five-week course, Captain Scribner, U.S. Army Mission, MAAG, El Salvador, announced that the ESAF Army was devising an appropriate uniform insignia.²⁸

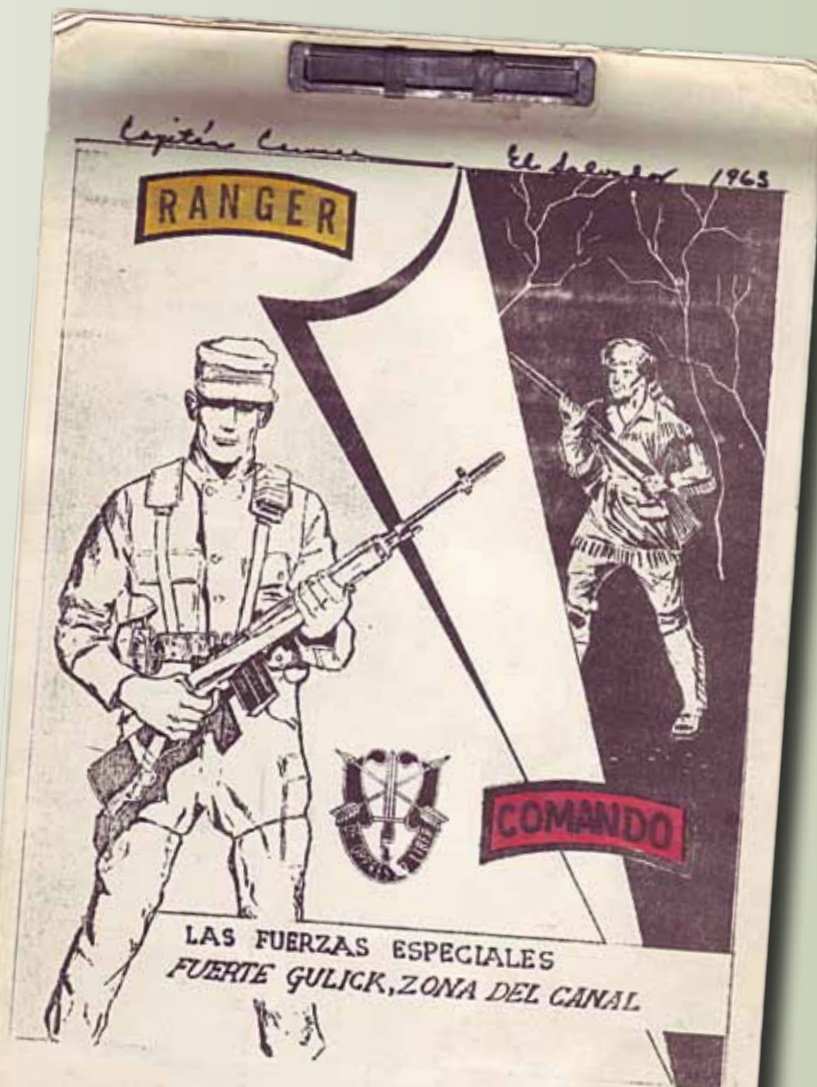
The Ranger training met the course objectives: develop leadership skills; instill courage and build self-confidence and endurance through tough, physically challenging operations at all hours; demonstrate the advantages of night operations; and provide the necessary skills to enable the Salvadorans to implement Ranger tactics and techniques in their parent organizations.³⁰ This group of airborne "pathfinders" became the nucleus of the premier fighting force in El Salvador. ODA-3 set a high standard of excellence. The Airborne Ranger MTT marked the beginning of a long Special Forces professional relationship with the El Salvadoran armed forces. A second 8th SFG training mission in early 1964, to form and train the first ESAF Airborne Squadron, will be the subject of a future article. ▲

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. He earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina and is a retired Army special operations officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and Colombia.

Endnotes

- 1 Detachment A-3, Company A, 8th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces (Special Action Force). After Action Report, Subject: After Action Report – Salvadoran Ranger Course, dated 21 June 1963, hereafter cited as Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR and retired Colonel Richard F. Carvell, St. Albans, West Virginia, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 17 October 2007, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Carvell Interview and date.
- 2 Carvell Interviews, 16 and 17 October 2007.
- 3 Retired Colonel José Eduardo Iraheta Castellon, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 19 July 2007, San Salvador, El Salvador, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as Iraheta Interview and date. *During the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, the United States military worldwide was placed on DEFCON 1 alert, the highest threat level. Four Special Forces teams (ODAs) from D Company, 7th SFG in Panama joined several CONUS teams in isolation at the U.S. Naval Air Station, Key West, Florida. There, they rehearsed assigned OPLANs (Operation Plan) missions. Central America had been within the range of the Soviet intermediate range ballistic missiles (IRBM), the SS-4 "Sandal" and SS-5 "Skean" missiles, ostensibly provided to protect communist Cuba from further U.S. attacks. Retired SGM Doroteo Valdez Flores, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 4 March 2008, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.*
- 4 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007, and Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007. *An updated version of this course was used by CPT John D. Waghelstein, 8th SFG, to teach COIN to Bolivian junior officers at the Infantry School in Cochabamba while MAJ Ralph W. "Pappy" Shelton, 8th SFG, was training the Ranger Battalion at Esperanza for its mission against Ché Guevara in 1967. Waghelstein was serving as an advisor to the Bolivian Army airborne battalion at Cochabamba. Retired Colonel John D. Waghelstein, Bristol, Rhode Island, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 12 June 2007, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.*
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- 8 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007.
- 9 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007.
- 10 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007, Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007, Retired COL Luis Mariano Turcios, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 12 December 2007, San Salvador, El Salvador, digital recording, hereafter cited by name and date, and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 11 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007 and Carvell interviews, 17 October 2007 and 22 February 2008. *The members of ODA-3 for the Salvadoran Ranger Training MTT were: CPT Richard F. Carvell, MSG Pedro Sanchez, SFCs Doroteo V. Flores, Nelson Moore, and Adrian Rodriguez, SSGs Harry Boyle and Eldridge Gilliken, and SGTs Rafael Zamarripa and Jose Garza. They were assisted by 1LT Dan Smith, SSGs Ruben Michel and Miguel Lopez, and SGT David Capion. Carvell emails to Briscoe, 23 & 27 February 2008, Subject: Answers to Questions, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.*
- 12 "Salvadoran Troops First Latin Americans To Go Through Ranger Training In Zone," undated news article (June 1963), U.S. Army Forces Southern Command newspaper, *The Buccaneer*, and "Examen Práctico de Comandos," undated news article (June 1963) in *Bucanero*, the Spanish language version of *The Buccaneer*, copies in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 13 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 14 Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007, Carvell Interviews, 16 October 2007 and 22 February 2008, and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 15 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR and Flores Interview, 4 March 2008.
- 16 U.S. Air Force. TSgt Robert J. O'Neil. *Special Air Warfare Center History*, 27 April – 31 December 1962 (Hurlburt Field, Florida, May 1963): 209-210.
- 17 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR, Iraheta Interview, 19 July 2007, and "First L.A. Students Take Ranger Training," undated article, USARCARIB newspaper, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. *Following 8th SFG standing operating procedures (SOP), the Salvadoran Ranger students jumped their M-1 Garand rifles and M-2 Carbines exposed. M1919A6 .30 cal light machineguns were carried in weapons containers. Radios were well-padded and jumped inside kit bags. Static line extensions were used for jumping the C-46.* Flores Interview, 4 March 2008.
- 18 Carvell Interview, 16 October 2007. *ODA-3 SFC Doroteo Valdez Flores landed hard on the Río Hato concrete runway, injuring his back. He spent a few days at Gorgas Hospital after the operation.* Flores Interview, 4 March 2008.
- 19 "Salvadoran Troops First Latin Americans To Go Through Ranger Training In Zone" and "Examen Práctico de Comandos."
- 20 Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007.
- 21 Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007 and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 22 Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007 and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 23 Turcios Interview, 12 December 2007. *SGT Luis Mariano Turcios later commanded the ESAF Airborne Squadron, oversaw its expansion to a battalion in 1983, and commanded it until 1988.*
- 24 Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007.
- 25 Turcios Interview, 12 December 2007.
- 26 *In the midst of the training the Ranger MTT members were required to stand the annual IG (Inspector General) Inspection and pull staff duty.* Carvell Interview, 17 October 2007 and Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.
- 27 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR and Carvell Interview, 16 October 2007.
- 28 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR. *The shoulder insignia adopted was a Comando tab.*
- 29 Eric Micheletti. *World Elite Forces* (France: MBI Publishing, 1993): 144.
- 30 Salvadoran Ranger Course AAR.

CPT Richard Carvell's copy of the Salvadoran Ranger Course After Action Report dated 21 June 1963.



Snap Shot

by Earl J. Moniz

The focus of this article is photograph restoration. Technology improvements provide the ability to restore original pictures, which have been damaged by aging, to their near-original quality and clarity. The USASOC History Office has years of experience in photo restoration.

It must be stated up front that nothing can rival the clarity and durability of film. A prime example is the cover of the previous



Front cover image of
Veritas Vol. 3 No. 4.

Veritas issue. That image was shot in 1944 by an OSS field photographer in India, yet it still retains all the detail, clarity, and contrast that was intended on the day it was taken. The image required very little adjustment to prepare it for publication. The level of technology available “back then” was sufficient enough to produce high quality images with superb longevity.

The care received by photographs and negatives taken all those years ago is of a much higher standard than most field photographers and hobbyists can afford. Years of neglect and abuse, however,

does not make a photograph useless for publication. In a few cases, as shown by the examples, the damage appears irreparable, but with the careful application of technology, the pictures can be successfully restored to print quality. The restoration process demonstrates that not all damaged photos are beyond saving.

From a historical perspective, a photograph should provide as much information as possible using the old acronym SALUTE (Size, Activity, Location, Unit, Time, and Equipment).¹ Much of that information is provided by the contributor. Sometimes, the photograph is all we have to determine that information. In those cases, assistance is requested from veterans, researchers, and subject matter experts.

Publishing these photographs brings its own set of problems. Unscrupulous individuals might use technology to deliberately attempt to alter the facts surrounding the photograph. It must be stated “on the record” that our alterations only attempt to bring the image back to its original intent *at the moment in time* when it was created. Pictures, graphs, charts, and maps are used to enhance the telling of the story and help the reader visualize the environment and surrounding circumstances. With that intent in mind, we do not alter any image to deceive the reader or alter facts surrounding the incident or event.



Once the damaged Moss Gill image (above) is restored (below), we can now begin the investigative process using SALUTE: four individuals (including the cameraman) appear to be restocking the lake with fish; the sign, the road, and the terrain gives us a good indication of the location, although the sign may not have survived; the shoulder patch gives us the unit - 4th Service Command; and they're in summer uniform (pith helmet).² The investigative process begins immediately; the more complete the picture is in the beginning, the easier the investigation becomes.





After: Some adjustments to contrast and brightness permit us to use the structures in the background, the uniforms of those involved, and the clarity of the harness dangling from the aircraft to better identify the image. It appears to be an A-Team-sized element undergoing infiltration/extraction training. The structures in the background make it appear to be Nha Trang in South Vietnam, which is confirmed by the uniforms, which also indicates Special Forces members. The state of construction will help veterans "fix" the appropriate date.

Looking closely at the photos, it appears that the damage to both is extensive. The Moss Gill Lake picture suffered major damage when the surface layer ripped from the underlying backing. The SPIES (Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction System) picture is a poor copy of the original that has faded dramatically with time. In the flashy, colorful world of modern publishing, neither would warrant a second look. In the detail-oriented, factual environment of military history, they deserve some time and effort to help document our growing legacy.

The embedded watermark on the Moss Gill Lake picture indicates it was a U.S. Army Signal Corps product. This event benefited from the advantage of attention to lighting, quality film, and serious archival care over the years. In spite of all those factors in its favor, the image was still damaged over time. With a little patience, some technology, and a little ingenuity, it has been restored to near-original quality.

On the other hand, the "coming out on strings"³ appears to be a spontaneous record with ambient lighting, unknown film quality, and a similarly serious but more popular method of archival protection.⁴ Here again, in spite of all the protection, it ultimately suffers the effects of aging. Once again, a little patience and some technology save the day; the picture is ready for print publication.

In the long run, pictures that might seem useless at first glance might very well provide ARSOF historical information and be worth saving. Not all pictures can be restored to their full original state. But, those pictures of significant historical value deserve restoration.

Contributions to our collection are scanned and returned as quickly as possible. In the return package, a CD or DVD (if the collection is large) of the digital files is provided to the owner. The USASOC History Office uses

Before: Any number of reasons would cause the photo of this training activity to become faded and cloudy.



Using the SPIES (Special Patrol Insertion/Extraction System) rig, a 4-man team could be extracted by a UH-1 "Huey."

the imagery contributed to ARSOF history along with the story of the owner. The owner gets his materials digitized and the satisfaction of knowing that he contributed to ARSOF history. ♣

Earl J. Moniz has been a digital information specialist with the USASOC History Office since 2001. After retiring as a Special Forces noncommissioned officer, he earned his M.L.S. from North Carolina Central University. Current projects include the USASOC History Office Information Management Program, digital imagery for USASOC History Publications, and the cataloging and organization of History Office imagery.

Endnotes

- ¹ A field intelligence acronym for remembering the significant factors of an enemy observation.
- ² <http://4thservicecommand.tripod.com>.
- ³ A Vietnam-Era vernacular term for insertion/extraction using ropes while slung under a helicopter.
- ⁴ Placed in a binder and moved from place to place over the span of a soldier's career; kept dry, but not necessarily protected from fluctuations of temperature and humidity.

CAESAR J. CIVITELLA

BULL SIMONS AWARD 2008

Congratulations to the 2008 Bull Simons Award winner, MAJ (ret) Caesar J. Civitella! In honor of U.S. Army Special Forces pioneer COL Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, the USSOCOM annual award is to recognize a single individual that has made significant contributions to and represents the embodiment of SOF. Caesar Civitella has devoted nearly sixty-four years to special operations.

In 1943, SGT Civitella, an airborne engineer, began his military career in Special Operations by volunteering for the Operational Group (OG) of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Civitella served with the 2671st Special Reconnaissance Battalion, Separate (Provisional), jumping behind enemy lines in France and Italy, and was personally decorated by OSS chief MG William J. Donovan.

After the war, SFC Civitella served in the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 82nd Airborne Division, until he received a direct commission to Second Lieutenant in 1951. After serving in the 508th PIR at Fort Benning, GA, Civitella returned to Fort Bragg in 1952 to be an instructor in the newly created Special Forces. He commanded teams in the 77th SFG and the 10th SFG. CPT Civitella went to South Vietnam in 1961 as a Military Advisory and Assistance Group (MAAG) training advisor, forming the first regional forces ("Rough Puffs"). His terminal assignment was Chief, G-3 Training Division, U.S. Army Special Warfare Center, before retiring as a Major on 31 August 1964.

The next day, Civitella began a new career with the Central Intelligence Agency, and served in Southeast Asia. His final assignment was as the CIA representative from 1981-1983 to U.S. Rapid Deployment Command (later USCENCOM) and U.S. Readiness Command at MacDill Air Force Base, FL. The Agency awarded him the Intelligence Medal of Merit for nineteen years of service.

After his retirement, Civitella continued to work in OSS veterans' groups and the Special Forces Association to promote the legacy of the OSS OGs. He is one of a few living OSS soldiers that pioneered Army Special Forces, and served in the CIA overseas. As a tribute to his lifelong involvement with Special Operations, Civitella will be awarded the Bull Simons Award on 19 May 2008 at USSOCOM in Tampa, Florida.

-Troy J. Sacquety

Photo by
OSS veteran
Joseph S. Genco

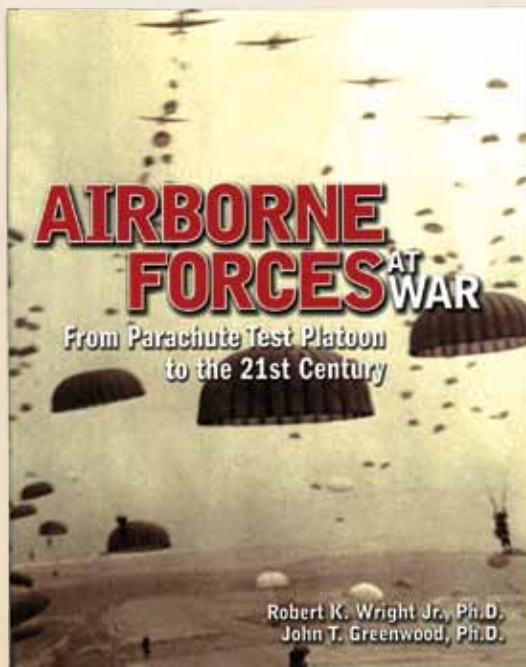
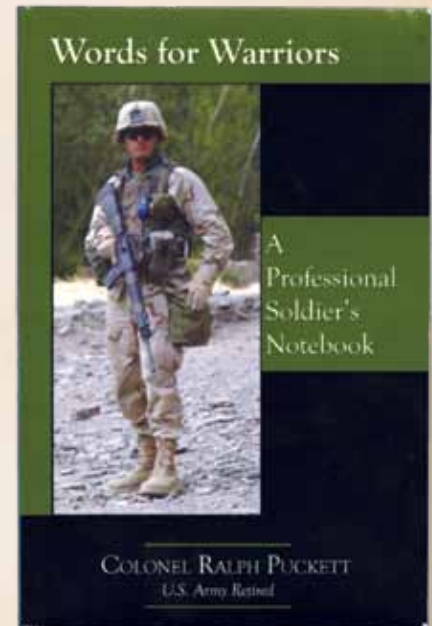


Books in the Field

"Books in the Field" provides short descriptions of books related to subjects covered in the current issue of Veritas. Readers are encouraged to use these recommendations as a starting point for individual study on Army Special Operations history topics.

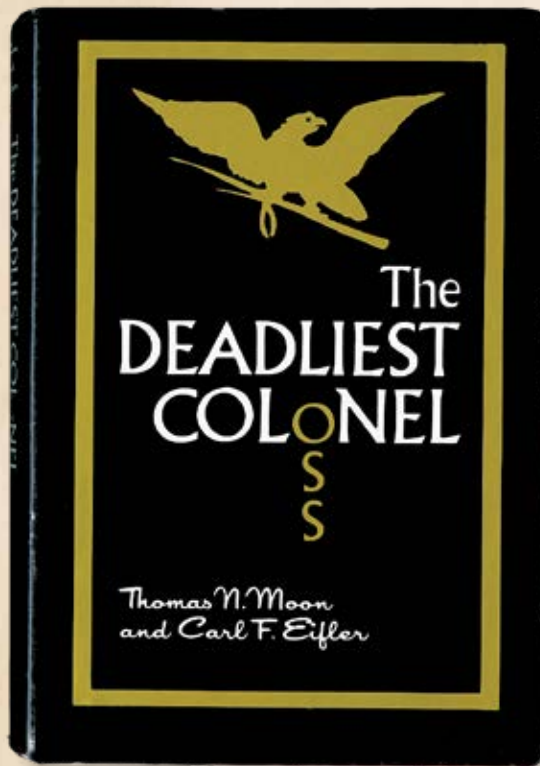
Colonel Ralph Puckett, *Words for Warriors: A Professional Soldier's Notebook* (Tucson, AZ: Wheatmark, 2007)

To say that the author, Colonel (retired) Ralph Puckett is a Ranger legend and an American hero is an understatement. His vast experience includes command of the 8th Ranger Company in Korea, the Mountain Ranger Camp in Dahlonega, Georgia, founding the Colombian Army's *Lancero* School in 1956, service in the 10th Special Forces Group, and an infantry battalion command in Vietnam. The *Lancero* School is Latin America's toughest and most prestigious small unit leadership course. Before retiring in 1971, Colonel Puckett earned two Distinguished Service Crosses (Korea and the Republic of Vietnam), 2 Silver Stars, 2 Bronze Stars, 10 Air Medals, and 5 Purple Hearts. In a no nonsense, story-telling approach Puckett delves into a distinguished military career to provide leadership vignettes for soldiers. Professionalism in the EUSA Ranger Company is very evident. Unlike many books by retired officers this has no political agenda, and Puckett has no axe to grind. His only desire is to help leaders improve their leadership and management skills and better take care of their soldiers. As Honorary Colonel of the 75th Ranger Regiment for the last 10 years, he has coached and mentored Rangers in training and in combat in Afghanistan and Iraq. Contains an index and bibliography.



Robert K. Wright, Jr. and John T. Greenwood, *Airborne Forces at War: From Parachute Test Platoon to the 21st Century* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007)

Airborne Forces at War is a coffee table book that provides an overview of the U.S. Army's airborne forces, from the original Parachute Test Platoon of 1940 to airborne forces today. The authors highlight the crucial battles and key airborne leaders of the last six decades. Airborne operations during World War II in the Mediterranean, Europe, and the Pacific begin a very readable history that closes with current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The best feature is the 162 black and white and 35 color photographs, some seldom seen before. These old photographs and period artwork are combined with maps to illustrate American airborne history. Index and bibliography are included, but lacks specific documentation (footnotes).

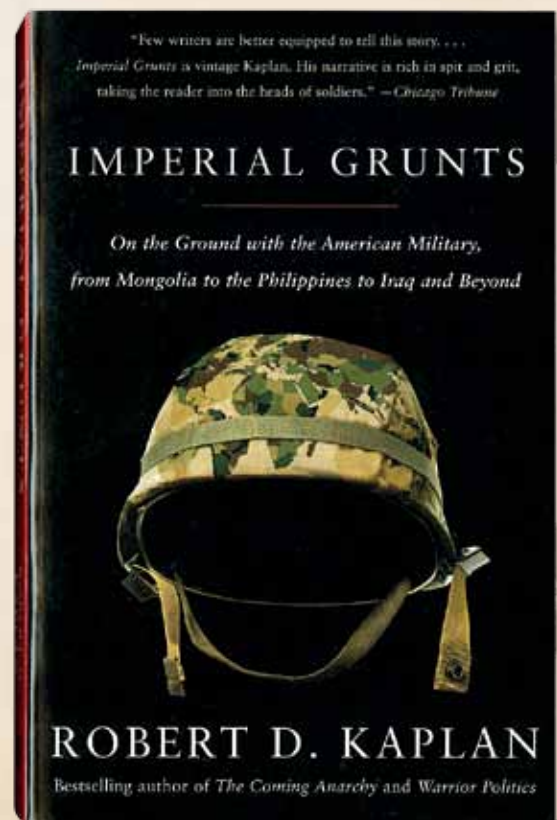


Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975)

Colonel Carl F. Eifler was the first commanding officer of OSS Detachment 101 in Burma. Under his command, from April 1942 until December 1943, the OSS unit grew from twenty-one men to several hundred, capable of conducting a major unconventional warfare (UW) campaign in support of the Allied offensive to recapture Burma in 1944-45. *The Deadliest Colonel* describes how Eifler overcame the many obstacles faced by this fledgling OSS unit in a British-dominated area of operations overseas. The memoir lacks citations and several events are not in the correct chronological order. It contains dialogue that alludes to conversations, but may not be accurate. Despite these shortcomings, this book provides valuable insight into the personality of the man who used brains and brawn to lead a unit that was without precedence in U.S. military history. Included as an appendix are the OSS reports and personal papers of Father James Stuart, an Irish Catholic priest who lived among the Kachin for many years prior to WW II. He volunteered for the OSS and was of great assistance to Merrill's Marauders during the Myitkyina Campaign. Contains photos, appendices, and a bibliography.

Robert D. Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts: On the Ground with the American Military, from Mongolia to the Philippines to Iraq and Beyond* (New York: Random House, 2005)

Author of ten books, the *Atlantic Monthly* correspondent Robert D. Kaplan provides an overview of special operations forces in the Global War on Terror. Written in "travelogue style" this book is not a military history. Instead it provides a narrative journey that covers military operations in the Third World. Kaplan's talent lies in his ability to contrast Third World views by country and by character types (particularly academia and journalism versus the reality seen by the military). In *Imperial Grunts* Kaplan explains tactical military operations in seven areas (Yemen, Colombia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and Iraq) based on his experiences with Army Special Forces, the 82nd Airborne Division, and the U.S. Marines Corps. As he contrasts these operations, Kaplan shows how effective small groups of highly trained individuals, given the freedom and initiative to operate independently, act as soldiers, statesmen, doctors, and negotiators can be. While Kaplan objectively balances a pro-military view that is criticized by some civilians, conservatives complain that he is too liberal. Regardless, Kaplan definitely has the "pulse" of the critical nodes of modern warfare. Contains a glossary, endnotes, and index.



Upcoming Articles...

Operation COTTAGE: The First Special Service Force in the Aleutians

By Kenneth Finlayson

The Canadian-American First Special Service Force initially saw action during Operation COTTAGE, the invasion of Kiska. In August 1943, the Forcemen were the spearhead of an amphibious invasion of that Japanese-held island at the far western end of the Aleutian Island chain. This operation demonstrated that the First Special Service Force could accomplish demanding missions which was proved again in Italy and Southern France. An elite infantry formation, the First Special Service Force is one of the legacy units of Army Special Forces.



Operation An Najaf

by Charles H. Briscoe

This operation began when elements of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 5th Special Forces Group, responded as a quick reaction force (QRF) on 28 January 2007 to assist Iraqi Army and Police forces under heavy attack. The initial rescue mission grew into an all-day and night-long slugfest against a well-trained and equipped, 550-600 man radical "Army of Terror" force entrenched in a strongly fortified compound on the outskirts of An Najaf, the center of Shi'a Islam. The 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Stryker combat team recovered a downed AH-64 Apache attack helicopter and processed 400 detainees.

A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign, Part II

by Troy J. Sacquety

OSS Detachment 101 conducted an exemplary unconventional warfare (UW) campaign during the 1944 north Burma offensive through its use of indigenous Kachin guerrillas. Chinese troops failed to capture the city of Myitkyina following the seizure of its airfield on 17 May 1944 by Merrill's Marauders. This necessitated a three-month siege of the city from late May until August. Detachment 101 guerrilla units helped to sever Japanese lines of communication south of the city, and supported the British Chindits. In so doing, they became a force multiplier for LTG Joseph W. Stilwell's Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC).



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